

IF THE SHOE FITS, WEAR IT: EMPOWERING WOMEN
MINISTERS TO WALK COMFORTABLY IN
THEIR CALL TO PREACH

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ABSTRACT

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by
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The context of this project is United Missionary Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio. The problem in the context is that there is no ministry present to empower women ministers to walk comfortably in their call to preach. If women ministers attend empowerment sessions on preaching, then they will be empowered to walk comfortably in the call to preach. The project was conducted over five weeks. Data was collected utilizing pre-project and post-surveys, group discussions and personal journal entries. Because women ministers participated in empowerment sessions, they were more empowered to walk comfortably in the call to preach.

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DEDICATION

The dedication of this doctoral thesis is in honor of my grandmother, my “Big Mama,” the late great Catherine Harrison. As young girl, I would spend my summers in Alabama with my “Big Mama” and my aunt, who were very instrumental in my church upbringing. As the matriarch of our family, my “Big Mama” did not get the chance to witness my call to the ministry, nor did she ever get the chance to hear me preach! However, every time that I stand up to preach, I feel my “Big Mama’s” presence! For every time I open up my preaching Bible, there lies a picture of my “Big Mama. She is there to greet me, and she is there with me from the beginning of the sermon to the end of the sermon! I dedicate this work to her memory!

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to every female in ministry that has gone before me, to every female in ministry that stands here with me, and to every female in ministry soon to come. “If The Shoe Fits, Wear It!” Preach The Word!

ABBREVIATIONS

CROWN Clergy Resource of Women Network

KJV King James Version

NIV New International Version

NRSV New Revised Standard Version

Once there lived a man who gifted his daughter a pair of glass slippers. She clutched them to her chest, tears welling up in her eyes. It was then that he spoke, ‘these were made with my two hands, some sweat, & a sprinkle of fairy dust. They’ll always fit you, even if you grow taller than a beanstalk. They’ll never slip, even if you’re forced to walk on ice all night long. Best of all, they’ll never, ever break, except in the case of an emergency.’

—Amanda Lovelace, *Break Your Glass Slipper*

INTRODUCTION

Many females have been known to relate to the fictional fairy tale in the story known as Cinderella. The context of Cinderella speaks to a young girl who is living in a home where she is neither loved, appreciated, or respected. This cruel treatment comes though actions of the other females who are also present in the home. The main focus of this fairy tale presents to the observer the occurrence of the royal ball where the prince is the honored guest, and goal for the night is for a young lady to capture the prince's attention and his heart in hopes that she will be chosen and possibly become the princess of the palace. Cinderella mysteriously and magically arrives at the ball, captures the attention and the heart of the prince, and before the stroke of midnight, she has to hurry to make her exit before she goes from "riches to rags." In her hurried state, Cinderella leaves behind a beautiful glass slipper, and now the prince has made it his life's mission to find this beautiful young lady, for whom this shoe fits, so that she can take her rightful place in the kingdom!

The project, "If The Shoe Fits, Wear It: Empowering Women Ministers To Walk Comfortably In Their Call To Preach," was designed to empower women ministers to walk in comfort, confidence, and commitment to their call to preach. Although throughout history, some denominations and churches have accepted women being called to preach and also ordained women in ministry,

[W]omen expressing a call to the gospel ministry still had to follow a path strewn with rejection, skepticism, struggle, and doubt, in spite of increased opportunities for ministry, training, and ordination. The official rules regarding clergy women were changed, but the unofficial traditions concerning ‘male-only’ leadership positions remained the same. The unofficial traditions still held that only men could serve as pastors, presiding elders, ruling elders, district superintendents, denominational heads, or bishops. Women were often ordained into ministry and just tolerated.¹

The same struggle that women in ministry have faced historically, they still face today. Many women in ministry are also serving in isolation. “With one or only a few other women in the ministry in the same locale, there is a need for female network or support groups to share information and exchange ideas.”² Therefore a ministry of empowerment is needed. “Empowering is a major component of female leadership. Women tend to empower others to feel confident to act on their own authority.”³ Although, “empowerment is one major component of women’s leadership, creating the environment for it to operate in is another.”⁴

Being that there is a great need for the empowerment of women in in their call to preach, this project, “If The Shoe Fits, Wear It: Empowering Women Ministers To Walk Comfortably In Their Call To Preach,” was designed to do just that. The context of origin that the projects springs from is a context that currently has three ordained clergywomen serving in the preaching ministry and felt the need to invite other clergy women from

¹ Vashti M. McKenzie, *Not Without A Struggle: Leadership Development For African American Women In Ministry* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1996), 35.

² McKenzie, *Not Without A Struggle*, 67.

³ McKenzie, *Not Without A Struggle*, 71.

⁴ McKenzie, *Not Without A Struggle*, 71.

other contexts to come and be empowered to walk in their call to preach. The design of this document is as follows.

Chapter One, Ministry Focus, has a subtitle of “Synergy Sisters!” It includes a contextual analysis of the United Missionary Baptist Church and aspects of my spiritual autobiography. This unit will explain how “Frames of Faith” and “Sermons of Life” will come together and form a synergy and provide a foundational context for which the project will stand upon.

Chapter Two, Biblical Foundations, has a motif of “Ground-breaking Daughters!” “Ground-breaking Daughters” will examine the biblical narrative of Numbers 27:1-8, which is the story of the “Daughters of Zelophehad.” This foundation will cover six “grounds” to include: “Biblical-Ground,” “Back-Ground,” “Camp-Ground,” “Standing-Ground,” “Sacred-Ground,” and “Common-Ground.” These six grounds that will be covered will provide the biblical foundation for which the project will stand upon.

Chapter Three, Historical Foundations, is subtitled: “Feet of Freedom!” “Feet of Freedom” will examine the life of the historical figure Harriet Tubman. In “Feet of Freedom,” one will travel in thirteen different sets of feet that will describe life of this great historical figure. “Feet of Freedom” includes: “Baby Feet,” “Bound Feet,” “Spiritual Feet,” “Hurting Feet,” “Prophetic Feet,” “Fleeing Feet,” “Free Feet,” “Mission Feet,” “One Set of Feet,” “Busy Feet,” “Final Feet,” “Legacy Feet,” and finally “Focus Feet.” The examination of these different “set of feet” will provide the historical foundation for which the project will stand upon.

Chapter Four, Theological Foundations, is constructed in a paradigm of “Shoes of Theology!” “Shoes of Theology” will examine four areas of theology. These four areas of

theology will be divided into two different sections to include: “Men Shoes,” and “Women’s Shoes.” “Men’s Shoes” will examine “Liberation Theology” and “Black Theology.” “Women’s Shoes” will examine “Feminist Theology” and “Womanist Theology.” The examination of these four different theologies will provide the theological foundation for which the project will stand upon.

Chapter Five, Interdisciplinary Foundations, is subtitled “Knowing Her-Self” “Knowing Her-Self” will examine the field of psychology, specifically “feminine Psychology,” where different “self” theories will be examined. The “self” theories that will be examined include “Self-Concept Theory,” “Self-Identity Theory,” and “Self-Efficacy Theory.” The examination of these theories will provide the interdisciplinary foundation for which the project will stand upon.

Chapter Six, Project Analysis, has a construct of “Walking in Glass Slippers.” “Walking in Glass Slippers” will present the project, “If The Shoe Fits, Wear It: Empowering Women Ministers to Walk Comfortably In Their Call To Preach!” This project analysis will present the methodology that was used in collecting data, the implementation that was used in implementing the project, and an examination of the results from the data. A summary of learning from the project will be presented, followed by the conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Synergy can be defined as, “the benefit that results when two or more agents work together to achieve something either one couldn’t have achieved on its own.”¹ The particular choice of definition for the term “sisters,” is one of “being in close relationship with another.”² This study of “Synergy Sisters,” will bring together various aspects of the Spiritual Autobiography: “Sermons of Life,” and specified content of the Contextual Analysis: “Frames of Faith,” in order to provide a working foundation for which a proposed project will be able to stand upon.

“Synergy Sisters” will begin with the Spiritual Autobiography’s “Sermons of Life” that will present five sermon titles that will outline my Spiritual Autobiography. Following “Sermons of Life” will be a brief review of the Contextual Analysis, “Frames of Faith,” where seven frames will be viewed which include four “Foundational Frames” and three “Focus Frames.” The three “Focus Frames” will be further explored in detail in order to provide a better “focus” in viewing a proposed project. The intended goal of “Frames of Faith” is to provide an overall frame where various aspects of the Spiritual Autobiography, “Sermons of Life,” can securely fit into a pattern. After the “Sermons of

¹ Merriam-Webster, “synergy,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/synergy>.

² Robert B. Costello et al, *Random House Webster’s College Dictionary* (New York, NY: Random House, 1991), 1252.

Life” are inserted into the “Frames of Faith,” “Synergy Sisters” will then provide the groundwork that will in turn lead to a proposed project that will be introduced in hopes that a possible project can come into fruition. Lastly, “Synergy Sisters” will conclude with a summary and a statement of empowerment for the participants within the proposed project that will be presented. In closing, not directly included with written words but definitely spoken in words, will be prayer that will undergird the proposed project and the leading of the Holy Spirit which will be the guiding force for the proposed project!

Spiritual Autobiography: Sermons of Life!

The Land of Faith!

Now the lord said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee (Gn 12:1, KJV).

I was born Rose Ann Irwin and grew up in Dayton, Ohio, in a single-parent household. My mother birthed six children; three lived and were reared in the Alabama; and three lived and were reared in Ohio. As a sum total, I am the youngest of ten children in all with four of those children being on my father’s side. I did not have a relationship with my father, and on my father’s side, I have two brothers and two sisters that I have met but have yet to fully know.

My mother worked two jobs to support my sister, my brother and me; she worked hard to make sure we had the things that we needed and even some of the things we wanted. Hardworking women are the norm in my family. In fact, most of the role models that I have come from the women in my family. Women also outnumber the men in my family. As a family, we have been told that we are just a family “full of women.” It was

the women in my family that were instrumental into shaping me into the woman that I am today.

Mom worked most of the time so it was my sister who was left in charge of taking care of my brother and me. My sister cooked for us, helped us with our homework, made sure we had our baths at night, and made sure we went to bed at a decent hour. When my mother got home from work, which was usually after midnight, everything in the house was clean and in order. Her work uniform was ironed and creased for the next day and we were in the bed. For many years, my sister held it down for the family and for that I will be eternally grateful.

Growing up, church and God have always been a part of my life. Even when I was “not in” church, church “was in” me. My big mama went to church. My mother went to church. My aunt went to church. My sisters went to church (well two of my sisters went to church), and my aunties went to church. In fact, it was the women in my family that I observed going to church and serving in the church. There has never been a time in my life that I can recall a man in my family that came and took me to church. I grew up in the United Missionary Baptist Church, and I was baptized at a very young age. At that time, you went to church because mama and daddy told you you had to go, but in my case, it was just my mom. My mom took my brother and myself to church and taught us to reverence and respect God. My sister believed in God, but did not attend church, and mom did not force her to attend.

After I was baptized, I went to church every Sunday and did what I was told to do. I ushered on the junior and young adult ushered board; I sang in the children’s choir, “the buds of promise,” and I was part of the “browning organization” that was somewhat

like Girl's Scout, where we had meetings at the church on Saturdays and had to wear ugly brown uniforms with funny looking hats. As we approached our teenage years, my mother did not force us to go to church; rather, she wanted us to attend church on our own. We would attend occasionally, and my brother stop going all together once he started getting older and hanging with the wrong crowd. I would attend church sometimes on my own, but as I got older, church felt different. I was only attending church just so I could say I was attending church and I really felt guilty most of the time I attended church. The older I grew, the less I attended church. My Saturday nights were usually spent going out to teenage clubs, parties, and skating rinks. My Sundays were spent at the skating rink and maybe occasionally at church on Sunday Mornings. Although, I was not attending church regularly or taking my relationship with the Lord seriously, I always had a respect and reverence for God because that is how I was brought up. When I graduated from high school, my name was on the church roll, and because of that, the church recognized my graduation and even gave me a graduation gift. I was glad for the gift, but I must admit I felt guilty because I had done nothing to deserve the gift except have my name on the "church roll." I was barely on the "church row."

After high school, my plans were to attend college; however, there were financial issues and I lacked confidence in myself. Those plans fell through, so I decided to find me a job and work, and I put my college dreams on the back burner. My first real job was at Economy Linen where I was a machine operator, where I would feed table linen and napkins into the machine to be folded. As I continued working at Economy Linen, I was still attending church occasionally and just basically doing my own thing. After a time of just doing my own thing, and with things beginning to fall a part in my life, I decided it

was time for me to repent, get my relationship with the Lord right and go back to church. At the age of twenty, I rededicated my life back to the Lord, rejoined the church, and became serious about my walk with the Lord!

After I recommitted myself back to God and rejoined the church, I became actively involved with the church. I joined the choir and became a choir director. I joined the junior and young adult usher board where I would eventually become vice-president, and I was eventually appointed president, where I served in that position for many years. Over the years, I grew in my relationship with the Lord and began attending Bible study, Sunday school, and I eventually became a Sunday school teacher. As I attended church more and grew in the Lord, I began to have a strange urge during the preaching time and I became a note-taker during the sermons because I felt that God was trying to tell me something, and I would write things down about the sermon. To this very day, I am still a note-taker during sermons.

I worked at Economy Linen from 1989 to 1991, and in March of 1991, I began working for Delphi Chassis Automotive Systems in Kettering, Ohio. My employment at Delphi was a huge blessing for I would have the opportunity to make more money and I also obtained awesome benefits that were new to me. In those days, Delphi and General Motors jobs were considered to be “good jobs,” so my employment at Delphi really pushed my college dreams totally out the door. My relatives who were also employed at Delphi and General Motors, as some refer to it as “Generous Motors,” told me just stick it out and eventually retire with good benefits. So that is what I set out to do. I planned to just go to church, serve the Lord, hopefully fall in love, and get married one day and retire from Delphi with many years of service and good benefits!

In 1998, I was at work one day and I was working by myself loading parts into the machine and I heard a voice, say “school, ministry and Bible college!” I immediately replied, “No Lord, I don’t have time for that, I’ve got to keep working and pay these bills!” I ignored the voice. A few weeks later after a long and frustrating day at work, my shift had ended, and I was on my way to the time clock to clock out and out of nowhere I found myself lying on the floor not really knowing what happened. My co-workers ran over to me and told me to drop my lunchbox that I had in one hand and to drop my purse that I had in my other hand. I told them that I was fine, and I tried to get up and they immediately held me down and told me, “No, you cannot get up.” At that time, I felt a surge of pain in my left foot unlike any pain that I felt before and I knew something was terribly wrong. I had been hit by a forklift truck and my left foot was nearly severed. The paramedics were called, and I was transported to Miami Valley Hospital not knowing what condition my foot was in. The incident was so horrific that when my supervisor arrived on the scene and saw the condition that my foot was in, he passed out and hit his head on a wire crate and had to be transported to the hospital to receive stitches in his head. I was told that he was on his way to the hospital right along with me. When I arrived at the hospital, my family had been notified and I was terrified because I couldn’t believe that on top of everything else that I was going through, this now was my present condition. I suffered a compound fracture to my left ankle and underwent emergency surgery that evening! My mother was crying and hysterical because she thought I would never walk again. After surgery, I was awakened to excruciating pain with an open cast on my leg, a plate, and screws in my foot.

A Midnight Ministry

And at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them (Acts 16:25, KJV).

After three days, I was released from the hospital and sent home to navigate life with this tragic injury. My mom had to take a six-week family medical leave from her job just to take care of me because I could not bear weight on my foot for six weeks. During my recovery, nighttime was quite miserable for me. I would have to sleep flat on my back with my leg propped up on a specialized pillow. At night the pain would be unbearable, even with pain medication. It was during those painful times that I would get my Bible and read it and that brought me some relief and some comfort. My recovery time eventually included intensive physical therapy when my foot was well enough to endure therapy. I went through months of physical therapy and the total healing process for my foot took several years. I would undergo a total of three surgeries just to get my foot back to some sense of normalcy!

How Bad Do You Want It?

When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, 'Wilt thou be made whole?' (Jn 5:6, KJV).

It is at this time, that I really began to seek the Lord about my calling. Since I was not working, I had plenty of time to read and study my Bible and that is what I did. I would read for hours on end, and I ended up reading through the whole bible. I would take notes on each chapter, and I just really began to seek God. From these notes came what sounded to me as sermon titles, and I would write them down. I began to pray; I began to study; and I began to fast because I wanted to know exactly what it was that

God wanted me to do. During this time, I began to have dreams of me standing in a pulpit and preaching and people jumping and shouting. This dream would occur over and over again. I would also have dreams of me praying for people who were sick, near death and even dead. And when I prayed for them and laid hands on them, they would get up. I did not really know what these dreams meant, but I sure wanted to find out.

One day I went to my pastor and told him what I had been going through and how I had been feeling and that I thought that the Lord was calling me to preach. My pastor's reply was, "I already knew. I just wanted you to be sure." From that time, my pastor took me under his tutelage and began to groom me for ministry. I would be assigned homework assignments of different Bible passages that I had to study and write on. During this time, I also began to surround myself with as much preaching as I could. I would buy preaching tapes and attend conferences where women would be preaching. I literally fell in love with preaching. I would see powerful women standing up preaching and I would think to myself, "I could never do that." However, the more I hung around preaching, the more I began to believe that I could do it.

This was an exciting as well as fearful time in my life because I was in a church that had no women ministers, and I was in a family that had no women ministers. What would I do? Would people accept me? Would my family believe me? I can remember the night I told my mother I was called to preach. I had just returned from a women's retreat, and I was feeling really empowered and felt like I really needed to do what I was called to do. I came home that Saturday evening, and my mother was sitting in a chair doing her hair and I said, "Mom I have something to tell you. God has called me to preach!" My mother looked at me and immediately started laughing. My heart sank. Immediately after

the laughing, came the crying. My mother began to cry, and she embraced me and told me I had her support. I was elated and relieved! I said to myself, “As long as my momma believes in me, I don’t really care if no one else believe in me.” Although I had the calling from God, my pastor’s guidance, and my mother’s support, I still felt scared, lacking in confidence, and felt unqualified to preach. I had no formal education for preaching. All I had was a high school diploma. I had never been to college.

The more I pursued God about walking in my calling, the more fearful I became. I became so fearful that I became stuck and refuse to move. Sunday after Sunday, I would go to church and do my duties of ushering and singing in the choir and each Sunday I would feel so out of place and miserable. One day after Sunday Service, I went home, feeling miserable and as I was washing dishes that afternoon. I heard the Spirit say, “You are waiting so long that you have become stale.” I immediately sensed in my Spirit that I was my biggest hindrance. On another occasion on a Sunday morning as I entered the church for Sunday school, I was hanging up my coat on the coat rack and the chairman of the deacon board, who is now deceased, came up to me, looked me in the face and said, “Do what God called you to do.” He then just simply turned around and walked into the sanctuary. I was left standing there in shock with my mouth wide open not believing what I just heard.

Step Out and Get Your Feet Wet

And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above: and they shall stand upon a heap (Jo 3:13, KJV).

The morning of April 6, 2003, was a typical Sunday morning. I prepared for Sunday morning service, and I went to church. That morning I did my usual duties, attended Sunday School, sung in the choir, and directed the choir. After the choir finished singing, as usual, we exited the choir stand to take our seats among the other congregants. I made my way to my usual spot at the back of the church. I usually sit on the right side of the pew. For some strange reason, this day, I sat on the left side of the pew, close to the center aisle. I sat down and prepared to hear the Word and take my usual notes from the sermon. The pastor took his text from Matthew 8:5-8, and the title of the sermon was "Speak The Word!" When I heard the title, a funny feeling went all over me, and I knew God was talking to me. The very first line that I wrote down on my notepad was the very first sentence that the pastor said, which was, "There is power in the Word of God!" For the rest of the sermon, all I heard was "I need you to speak the Word!" The whole page in my note pad had the very same thing written over and over again, all the way down to the bottom of the page. "I need you to speak the Word!" At the end of the sermon, the invitation was extended. In the Baptist Church, we call it "The doors of the church were open." When the doors of the church were opened, I put my notepad down, grabbed my Bible in my hand, entered into the center aisle and headed to the front of the church. I sat down in the chair that was placed up front. Many of the congregants, including my mom came up and hugged me, crying, and praising the Lord, because many of them knew what I was about to say. The pastor asked me to stand up, and when it was my time to speak, I said, "I have been called to preach the Word of God!" The church stood, clapped, and praised God! Some sat quietly and did not say anything. My pastor acknowledged my calling before the church and told the church that I would preach my initial sermon and

be licensed to preach the Gospel. After I announced my calling, I felt a tremendous load lifted from me, and I felt so free!

During the preparation process for my first sermon, one day, I heard the Lord speak to me and say, “Step out on the good foot!” I began to converse with the Lord, and I said, “Lord you mean, the good foot referring to right foot?” I clearly heard the Lord say, “No, the good foot is that left foot, that foot that has been injured and that left foot that knows what it is like to depend on me!” The day finally came; it was August 31, 2003; that afternoon, I stood in front of a church filled with church members, family, and friends, and I preached my first sermon entitled: “Step Out and Get Your Feet Wet!” There was a definite feeling of nervousness, but there was also a feeling of liberation because I finally felt that I was doing what God called me to do.

A Woman Who God Sees

And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? (Gn 16:13, KJV).

As I look back and reflect over this journey, I now have a clearer picture of how God has been at work in my life. From the very beginning, even in my mother’s womb, I was called to preach the Gospel. It has been almost sixteen years of preaching the Gospel and God has been with me and God has opened up many doors of preaching opportunity for me. At this point in my life and ministry, I am really seeking God on where God is taking me. In the story of Hagar, in the sixteenth chapter and the eight verse, as Hagar was fleeing from the house of her mistress and wandering in the wilderness, God asked Hagar, “Hagar where did you come from and where are you going?” (Gn 16:8, paraphrased). I just want to be where God has called me to be. One thing I know is that I

am definitely called to “preach the gospel!” I do know that God has called me as a “trailblazer” for women in ministry, specifically in the preaching ministry. I was the first woman in the history of my church to be licensed to preach the Gospel, and since that time, our church has licensed three other women into the preaching ministry, two of which currently serves at the church. God has, is and I feel will continue to use me in this capacity of helping women step into their calling as preachers of the gospel. It is this reasoning that the proposed project, “If The Shoe Fits, Wear It: Empowering Women Ministers To Walk Comfortably In Their Call To Preach,” is being set forth!

Contextual Analysis: Frames of Faith!

In the book, “*Studying Congregations*,” the author suggests that “frames” or “Lens” offer you a perspective, a vision, and a particular highlighting and marking off of what you see.”³ “Our frames are intended to help the reader see congregations clearly despite habits of mind that often obscure them. They are intended to reorient thinking in ways that we hope will be fruitful. Frames invite the onlooker to adopt a new stance toward what is only too familiar.”⁴ In “Frames of faith,” a Contextual Analysis of The United Missionary Baptist Church is given, where seven frames will be viewed in order to create a picture of the context. The seven frames are: The Ecological Frame, The Cultural Frame, The Resources Frame, The Process Frame, The Gender Frame, The Frame Within a Frame, and The Prophetic Frame. These seven frames will be furthered fractioned into two different categories to include: “Foundational Frames,” and “Focus

³ Nancy T. Ammerman et al., *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Abington Press, 1998), 13.

⁴ Ammerman, *Studying Congregations*, 14.

Frames.” The Foundational Frames include: The Ecological Frame, The Cultural Frame, The Resource Frame and The Process Frame. The “Focus Frames” include: The Gender Frame, The Frame Within a Frame and The Prophetic Frame. The first “Foundational Frame” that will be viewed will be “The Ecological Frame.”

Foundational Frame: The Ecological Frame

The Ecological Frame is to, “see the congregation as an organism in an environment in which there are many other organisms that together make up the social and religious world.”⁵ The ecology in which one focuses on can consider all things from the neighborhood where one is located, but it will also consider other areas that are responsible for drawing members, such as economic and political aspects that are imperative to the make-up of the context. United Missionary Baptist Church is located in Dayton, Ohio, in the Southern Dayton View Area, where the current population is 2,229.⁶ According to the 2000 Decennial Census, the population Southern Dayton View was 4,170 and according to the 2010 Decennial Census, the population was 2,579, with a decrease of change of 38%.⁷

United Missionary Baptist Church is located at 900 Lexington Avenue and as a little girl growing up; I once lived on Lexington Avenue, living in walking distance of the context! Over the years, just the street of Lexington alone has changed drastically! At

⁵ Ammerman, *Studying Congregations*, 14.

⁶ Southern Dayton View, Dayton, OH Demographics, <https://www.areavibes.com/dayton-oh/southern+dayton+view/livability>.

⁷ 2010 Decennial Census Summary, Southern Dayton View Neighborhood Planning District, <https://www.daytonOhio.gov/DocumentCenter/view/124/2010-dayton-census-summary-report-pdf?bidld=>.

different times, there were once three corner stores that stood on three different corners around Lexington Avenue. Today, that corner that held that store is now a vacant lot, with the other two stores that are present on the other two corners, are now closed down and abandoned! Many of the houses that are located within the 700-900 block of Lexington are either empty, abandoned or torn down! There are only a few houses that are occupied within the block of the context! The next “Foundational Frame” to be viewed will be “The Cultural Frame.”

Foundational Frame: The Cultural Frame

The Cultural Frame is, “to see the context that one is studying, as a group that has invented ways of being together that are uniquely its own.”⁸ The Cultural Frame addresses the history of the context. The United Missionary Baptist Church planted her roots in the year of 1968, when several members peacefully departed from the Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church to start a prayer band. The prayer band was started in the home of one of the departing deacons. Eventually, the Prayer Band relocated to 1717 West Third Street, where the building was rented by the departing deacon.

In the fall of 1968, the Prayer Band was officially named, ‘The Peace Mission,’ and in 1968, Reverend Charles Fair was called to preach, and he and his wife became members of the Peace Mission, and after some time, Rev. Fair was asked to be the pastor of the Peace Mission.⁹ Later on in the year of 1968, the name, “Peace Mission,” was changed to “The United Mission,” and was organized under the guidance of the pastor of

⁸ Ammerman, *Studying Congregations*, 14.

⁹ “History of The United Missionary Baptist Church,” Church Archives, May 13, 2019.

Mt. Moriah. In March of 1969, The United Mission was organized as a church and the name was changed to the United Missionary Baptist Church and was officially founded by Rev. Charles Fair. The membership at that time was seventeen members.¹⁰

In the month of May in 1969, the United Missionary Baptist Church moved to a church building at 1206 McArthur Drive. In several years, the church increased in membership and a larger building was needed. On March 9, 1975, a two hundred car motorcade proceeded from 1206 McArthur Drive to 900 Lexington Avenue. The context had an enrollment of approximately two hundred members. On January 16, 1992, God called pastor Charles Fair home, and in May of 1992, the context chose their next pastor from within the context, and Rev. Leroy Cothran became the pastor of the United Missionary Baptist Church.¹¹ In the 50 years of existence, the context has only had two pastors, and pastor Cothran has served as pastor for the last 28 years. Today, the context continues to strive to serve the Lord and be a beacon of light in their community. The next “Foundational Frame” that will be viewed will be “The Resource Frame.”

Foundational Frame: The Resources Frame

The Resources Frame focuses on a context’s “capital.” The “capital” one will give attention to from this vantage point may be the congregation’s members, its money, its buildings, its reputational and spiritual energies, its connections in the community, and even its history.”¹² To view a context through, “The Resources Frame,” is to “treat a

¹⁰ “History of The United Missionary Baptist Church.”

¹¹ “History of The United Missionary Baptist Church.”

¹² Ammerman, *Studying Congregations*, 15.

congregation as a collection of elements drawn out of a wider social and religious context that together have the capacity or the potential to accomplish social and religious goals.”¹³ The Resource Frame addresses to demographics of the context. Over the past fifty years, the membership of the United Missionary Baptist Church, looks quite different from that two hundred count that occurred many years ago! According to “The United Missionary Baptist Church Membership Catalog of January 2019,” there was a record of “90” active members and a record of “14” inactive members.¹⁴ As of June 15, 2019, the current number is roughly around “55” active members and “37” inactive members. Of these “55” members, “42” are female and “13” are male. There are “53” African Americans and “2” Caucasians. The age range of the United Missionary Baptist Church range from the ages 10-98. The education status of The United Missionary Baptist Church ranges from Grade School level education to Graduate Level Education. The Socio-economic atmosphere of the context is that a large majority of tithes paying members are the Senior Citizens that are retired and on a fixed income. The final “Foundational Frame” that will be viewed is “The Process Frame.”

Foundational Frame: The Process Frame

The Process Frame, “calls attention to the underlying flow and dynamics of a congregation that knit together its common life and shape its morale and climate.”¹⁵ The Process Frame addresses the leadership structure of the context. There are two ordained

¹³ Ammerman, *Studying Congregations*, 132.

¹⁴ United Missionary Baptist Church Membership, January 2019, Church Archives.

¹⁵ Ammerman, *Studying Congregations*, 16.

offices of this particular context are: Clergy and Deacons. The pastor is the under shepherd and is considered the head and leader of the context. The ministers are next in charge, followed by the deacons who are responsible for the administrating duties of the church. The pastor is in charge of the pulpit and the Spiritual atmosphere of the context, whereas the deacons are in charge of the business of the church, such as taking care of the finances. The ministers assist the pastor in the Spiritual atmosphere of the context and these three offices, work together to keep order, unity as well as keeping the Spiritual cohesiveness of the context. The area of leadership is where the transition from the “Foundational Frames,” to “Focus Frames” will take place! The three “Focus Frames” are: The Gender Frame, The Frame Within a Frame and The Prophetic Frame. The first “Focus Frame” is “The Gender Frame.”

Focus Frame: The Gender Frame

In the “Gender Frame,” we “look for ways in which congregational life is systematically structured around the roles and relationships of women and men. Indeed, one cannot fully understand what happens in congregational life without paying attention to voices of both women and men, without looking for the ways in which congregations both empower and oppress women.”¹⁶ In this Gender Frame, we will specifically focus on women in ministry, particularly, women in the preaching ministry, and particularly, women in the preaching ministry in the Baptist Church!

The “Gender Frame” in the context of the United Missionary Baptist Church is an especially important frame, being that a great majority of the workers within the

¹⁶ Ammerman, *Studying Congregations*, 14.

context are women! In the area of ministry, all three of the Associate Ministers are women! Women outnumber the men in this particular context. 43 of the 55 active members on the church role are women! In the area of the Gender Frame, United Missionary Baptist Church will serve as a “Frame” for empowering women to fulfill their call in the preaching ministry. When one views a frame, there is usually a picture that the frame contains. In this Gender Frame, the overall goal is to present a picture that women can view, and they can see themselves in fulfilling their call in the preaching ministry. The next “Focus Frame” that will be viewed is: “The Frame Within a Frame!”

Focus Frame: A Frame Within a Frame

In the area of the Frame Within A Frame, the context is viewed in its relationship to how the context serves as a “supporting” frame for women in ministry. In describing, “A Frame Within A Frame,” it can be described as, “A photographer using something within the scene in front of them to frame the main subject,” therefore, creating a second frame within the image.¹⁷ “The purpose of using a “Frame Within a Frame,” is to help move the viewer’s eye toward the subject.”¹⁸

Over the years, the context as served as a “Frame Within a Frame” for other women in ministry organizations throughout the surrounding community. Organizations such as The Interdenominational Women’s Ministerial Alliance (IWMA), and The Young Women in Ministry (YWIM). These organizations were allowed to use the

¹⁷ “A Frame within a Frame: A useful composition technique in photography,” Geraint Rowland Photography, March 21, 2018, <https://www.geraintrowland.co.uk/blog/2018/3/21/a-frame-within-frame-a-useful-composition-technique-in-photography>.

¹⁸ “A Frame within a Frame: A useful composition technique in photography.”

facilities of the context for various services, such as preaching services and also, they were able to receive full support from the pastor, ministers, and the context at large! Many churches in the surrounding areas, particularly Baptist Churches, are not as opening and inviting to women in ministry, as The United Missionary Baptist Church has been!

Being that all three of the associate ministers of this context are female, it has been stated by the pastor, “that this particular context should be a “source” for women in ministry.” Meaning that the context should serve as a place where women in ministry can come and obtain training, support, and also receive mentorship from other women in ministry. “A female role model for women in ministry is vital because, as Carol Noren states, “Seeing another woman in the pulpit has the effect of raising a sort of mirror to the women preacher. It causes her to compare her own work with this other person, who is like her and yet not like her, to reflect on how she has grown and what she may become.”¹⁹ “Mentors are needed, but they must be real. Women are not looking for those who just pay lip service to the process of mentoring—they require individuals who will bring meaning and faithfulness to the role. Areas in which mature women in ministry can mentor those new to the role include dress, general decorum, pulpit presence, deportment, and speech, such as finding one’s preaching voice and proper posture.”²⁰

“No matter how supportive of women in the pulpit a man may be, he cannot successfully help in such areas with balanced sensitivity and diplomacy. Noren maintains, “A feminine role model can demonstrate what a masculine one can only

¹⁹ Hyveth Williams, “Women in the Word,” May 1, 2019, Faculty Publications, Andrews University, <https://digitalCommons.andrews.edu/pubs/1172>.

²⁰ Williams, “Women in the Word.”

parody. The way a woman's laughter, solemnity, tension, and other moods come across over a public address system is something only a woman preacher can show another."²¹

Noren further asserts, "When a woman who is a role model testifies to the divine, enabling grace at work in her own life and ministry, her successors learn to claim its sustaining power for themselves."²² The overall goal of the "Frame Within a Frame," is for the context to serve as a "fueling station," where clergy women can come and be empowered and from that empowerment, effect change in their context, community and also in their own personal walk in ministry. Therefore, this particular context would be the perfect "Frame Within a Frame," for women in the preaching ministry! The final "Focus Frame" that will be viewed is: "The Prophetic Frame."

Focus Frame: The Prophetic Frame

In the area of the Prophetic Frame, we consider the context in the present and seek to get a pulse of the present context and also gain a sense of where God is taking the particular context. The Prophetic Frame is not a specific frame that is defined or described along with the other six frames but is generated out of the view of the other six frames, in order to see what God is doing and what God will do in the particular context. In viewing the Prophetic Frame, it is the belief that The United Missionary Baptist Church will be a driving force for women in ministry! With the implementation of the proposed project that the context will provide the frame for, it is believed that this prophetic frame will become a permanent part of the context!

²¹ Williams, "Women in the Word."

²² Williams, "Women in the Word."

Synergy Sisters

It is important to first lay a foundation that “Synergy Sisters” can stand upon.

“Two-thirds of all Bible-believing Christians are women!”²³ When it comes to fulfilling the great commission, the enemy really knows how to disrupt the work of the Great Commission, by trying to cut down the number of workers in the workforce of fulfilling the Great Commission. Fredrick Franson said, “when two-thirds of the Christians are excluded from the work of evangelizing, the loss for God’s cause is so great that it can hardly be described.”²⁴ “Jesus said we should open our eyes, look at the field, and see that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Why would anyone look at the huge harvest, we face and the tiny workforce trying to gather it in and seek to eliminate any workers whom God would call? We don’t need fewer workers. We need more! But the enemy is trying to cut back on the number of workers for the harvest in every way he can.”²⁵ In all actuality, we are not focusing of “fulfilling the work” of the Great Commission, but we are more focused on “fighting the workers” of the Great Commission!

The question that needs to be asked is, “Who are The Fighting Workers?” Within the church, particularly the Baptist Church, the role of preaching is normally male dominated, and the fight or disagreement that usually occurs is in the area of female and male clergy. If the church, the body of Christ is going to be effective, then it must come

²³ Loren Cunningham, David Joel Hamilton, and Janice Rogers, *Why Not Women? A Fresh look At Scripture On Women In Missions, Ministry And Leadership* (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 2000), 15.

²⁴ Cunningham, Hamilton, and Rogers, *Why Not Women*, 15.

²⁵ Cunningham, Hamilton, and Rogers, *Why Not Women*, 16.

to some common ground of the issue of male and female clergy. “It is clear that we all need each other. The gifts that God has given to women preachers should not be diminished or limited in any way. If our churches and communities are to develop, we need the contributions of all people. If we do not recognize these gifts, we limit the potential of the women preachers as well as those that might be influenced by their gifts.”²⁶

In the area of being “called to preach,” the controversy in the area of gender has always been at the forefront of the Baptist Church. James Nooks states, “The call to preach did not come from a person---it came from God. Many women, once they announce that they have been called by God to preach, face a barrage of questions that most men do not have to face. Often, women that acknowledge their call to preach, are discouraged by pastors, that do not believe in women preachers.”²⁷ Nooks further goes on to say, “It is interesting to note that many of the same pastors that discourage women will be very encouraging to men that acknowledge their call. In many churches, men that acknowledge their call to preach are invited to the pulpit and encouraged to preach within a short period of time, and they are supported in becoming pastors. In contrast, women are often not allowed to sit in the pulpit, are not asked to preach very often, if at all, and they have more difficulty in becoming pastors.”²⁸ Nooks also presents a very interesting, as well as a very true observation in that, “the pulpit has been viewed as “men’s space”

²⁶ James A. Nooks, *You Answer The Call Or You Die: Let the Women Preach in the Black Baptist Church* (Baltimore, MD: Publish America, 2007), 35.

²⁷ Nooks, *You Answer The Call Or You Die*, 30.

²⁸ Nooks, *You Answer The Call Or You Die*, 30.

and the pew as “woman’s place.”²⁹ Now that a “foundation” has been laid and a “frame” has been created, what is the proposed project that will be projected?

Proposed Project

Just as in the natural sense, a “frame” holds a “picture,” the United Missionary Baptist Church will be the “frame” that will hold the “picture,” the “project!” The Proposed Project Topic is: “If The Shoe Fits, Wear it! Empowering Women Ministers To Walk Comfortably In their Call To Preach!” As a woman in ministry and also as the first woman to be licensed to preach in the history of my particular context, I feel that I have been set on a path as a “Trailblazer” for women in ministry, I have experienced a great deal, I have learned a great deal and I have even taken some “blows” for the women who have since come behind me in the preaching ministry! I feel as if I am setting a good example of being an educated and trained woman in ministry! On a personal note, it really bothers me to witness women who are untrained in the preaching ministry! As women in ministry, we have to know more, work more, and continue to grow more than men in ministry! One of the very first lessons that I learned as a woman in ministry is that: “Men are celebrated, but Women are Tolerated!” This should not be! Both men and women should be celebrated! God spoke to the prophet Joel and said, “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.” (Joel 2:28-29, NIV). God said

²⁹ Nooks, *You Answer The Call Or You Die*, 40.

that He would pour out His Spirit on both male and female and they shall prophesy! Both should be celebrated!

The general nature and content of the proposed project will be to equip, empower and encourage women in the preaching ministry. Particularly, the Baptist Church. Specifically, The United Missionary Baptist Church! United has licensed four women into the preaching ministry and in August of this year, United Missionary Baptist Church will ordain all three of its female clergy! This has never been done in the history of the church and I feel that this will set United on the map as being a help to women in ministry and also being a beacon of hope to women in ministry! United has currently birth four women in the ministry and I believe there are more female births to come! I believe that United Missionary Baptist Church will certainly serve as a “fueling station” for “Female Clergy!”

The proposed project will include the clergy women of United as well as the surrounding community. Also, there is one lay leader within the context that I believe has a call to preach upon her life, that will be included, because I feel that this proposed project will be beneficial to her! This proposed project will definitely be a “context within a context,” thus creating the “Frame Within a Frame” effect!

What I seek to learn in this proposed project is the lessons, strengths, and challenges that women in ministry face! I desire to know of some of the present challenges that women in ministry are facing and to be able to discuss and discover ways that these challenges can be solved. I also want to possibly learn, what woman, or women within my particular context that are seeking God in the area of ministry. I also want the other two ministers of United to contribute to the project and to be helped by this

proposed project! I also want to learn more about myself as a woman in ministry and also to grow and be helped by the proposed project as well! It is also my desire to meet, fellowship and network with women in ministry that I have never met before! I desire for individual contexts to be changed for the greater good, when the women go back to their particular context to affect change! Overall, I want the United Missionary Baptist Church to experience possible growth and to affect change for the greater good after taking part in this proposed project!

Another area of personal desire is that this proposed project will be the foundation and the birthing of a ministry for clergy women that God has placed in my spirit! “The C.R.O.W.N Connection,” “Clergy Resource of Women Network,” will be a ministry that will “equip, empower and encourage women in ministry.” The scripture that will support this ministry will be Revelation 12:1, that states, “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” (Revelation 12:1, KJV). The goal of this particular ministry, will serve as a support group as well as resource for clergy women and it is quite possible that the proposed project, will one day be turn into a published book and serve as a textbook for this particular ministry!

Conclusion

The proposed project, “If The Shoe Fits, Wear it: Empowering Women Ministers To Comfortably Walk In Their Call To Preach,” will be designed to serve as a resource for women in the preaching ministry. The theme of the project will be the Preaching Ministry. A possible working hypothesis is: “When women in ministry, participate in

specialized empowerment training, they will affect positive change within their particular context.”

A possible outline for proposed project will be:

1. Create a data base of women in ministry in the surrounding community and area.
2. Decide what materials will be discussed and do the research.
3. Decide on length of Training Sessions
4. Have an introductory and planning meeting and invite women to come.
5. Conduct and give pre-surveys of participants/have context participants to do pre-surveys.
6. Conduct the sessions for the required and set time
7. have the participants to gauge and keep track of learning and changes in their particular ministries. Possibly through the use of journaling.
8. conduct post surveys of both participates and contexts
9. Investigate findings/ Record Results
10. Close out the project study with a possible celebration
11. Birthing and growth of “The C.R.O.W.N” Connection: “Clergy Resource of Women Network!

Statement of Empowerment!

In closing, in the natural, when it comes to women, especially, women who attend church, and especially those women who are very active in the church, and furthermore, women who serve in the preaching ministry, one of the most uncomfortable things that a

woman can experience, are shoes that hurt your feet! There is nothing like “comfortable feet among clergy women!” So it is, also in the spiritual! Women in the preaching ministry, need to find their “comfortable spiritual shoes” and if the “Shoe Fits, Then Wear It,” confidently and fulfill the call of God to preach the Gospel!

In the book, *“Why Not Women?”* and in the section entitled, *“They Fit You Like a Glove*, the author states, “Your greatest satisfaction will come as you submit to God and fulfill the purpose you were created for. God has gifted you to do what He has called you to do. He’s not unjust. He would never ask you to do something without giving you the ability to accomplish it, nor would He give you a gift and then tell you to never use it.”³⁰ “With that being said, I will close with this! To my preaching sisters, “If The Shoe Fits, Then Wear It!” Not only Wear it but wear it with confidence and go forth and preach the Word and do what thus says the Lord! To God Be The Glory, for the great things that God is going to do!

³⁰ Cunningham, Hamilton, and Rogers, *Why Not Women?*, 48.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The term, “Ground-breaking,” refers to breaking ground in a new area. Specifically, it is defined as: “Being or producing something like nothing done or experienced or created before.”¹ Furthermore, it is said that “if something is ground-breaking, it is very new and a big change from other things of its type.”² When something or someone is referred to as “Ground-breaking,” it is generally something that is innovative or someone that is pioneering.³ Biblically speaking, the bible contains many “ground-breaking” occurrences, as well as “groundbreaking” individuals, who made powerful and prophetic strides in the Christian faith that we know today. In the area of the prophetic realm and the making of a prophet, it has been suggested that in reference to the scripture, “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you: I have appointed you a prophet to the nations” (Jer 1:5).” Bill Hammon asserts that “the making of a prophet involves more than being preordained in

¹ Groundbreaking.org, s.v. “groundbreaking,” <https://www.audioenglish.org/dictionary/groundbreaking.htm>.

² *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “groundbreaking,” <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/groundbreaking>.

³ *U K Dictionary*, s. v. “groundbreaking,” <https://www.lexico.com/definition/groundbreaking>.

Christ and called by God this way.”⁴ He adds, “the predestined calling of a prophet is only the beginning of the process God takes a man through to make him into an individual that can handle the burden and pressures of that ministry.”⁵ In response to this train of thought, further consideration is needed. Whereas the prophet Jeremiah is referring to a man, the area of prophetic realm is inclusive of all! “Every Christian needs to believe in and know about the dimension of the prophetic ministry — not just a few called to be prophets, but all believers have a part to play.”⁶

In order to widen the lens of inclusion in the prophetic realm and to narrow the biblical scope of “ground-breaking” individuals, let us consider, women who were “ground-breakers!” Women such as Hatshepsut, who was Pharaoh’s daughter, who served as the adoptive mother of Moses and was instrumental in raising up Israel’s deliverer! Women such as Queen Vashti, who refused the king’s request and started an uproar in the kingdom! “Groundbreaking Nameless Women,” such as the woman with the issue of Blood, that had enough faith in her condition, to fight through a crowd, to get to Christ and to get her cure! The most “ground-breaking” of them all, is Mother Mary! The “ground-breaker” that birthed the Savior of the World! Jesus Christ!

This biblical foundation paper will focus on several women, particularly daughters who were “ground-breakers!” “Ground-breaking Daughters,” will focus on Numbers 27:1-8, which is the account of Zelophehad’s daughters, who goes before Moses and the people, in order to get their rightful possession of land that belonged to

⁴ Bill Hammon, *Prophets, and the Prophetic Movement: God’s Prophetic Move Today* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 1990), 1.

⁵ Hammon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement*, 1.

⁶ Hammon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement*, 13.

their father. This biblical foundation paper will explain how these daughters worked together as a united front in order to do something “ground-breaking” that has never been done before. In the article, “A Theology of Advocacy for Women,” Delores Williams suggests that women must come together as a united front and “use this power to rid women’s lives of economic and spiritual poverty.”⁷ Williams further states, “to challenge this poverty, women will have to advocate for women in places where women have not been before.”⁸ These daughters dared to go to a place women had not been before and they dared to do something that women had not done before. From the actions and determination of these daughters, God spoke, and the law was changed in their favor, with the granting of their rightful inheritance and in the changing of the law! These daughters were indeed, “Ground-breakers!”

There is a need to know, on occasion, what a story meant at the time it was composed, but it is more important to know what the story can mean here and now. Scripture stories are not just about characters or history; they are more about what we are being inspired to do with our lives as individuals and even more importantly as community of believers.⁹

These “Ground-breaking Daughters,” will teach us that women must display a strategy of courage, strength, and unity, in order to advocate for themselves and other women as well.¹⁰ In this body of work, “Ground-breaking Daughters,” will cover the following grounds:

1. “Biblical-Ground”- Presentation of Pericope-Numbers 27:1-8 (NRSV)

⁷ Delores S. Williams, “A Theology of Advocacy for Women,” *Church & Society* 91, no.2 (November 2000): 4-8, <https://search-ebsost-com.utsdayton.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rh&AN=ATLA0000219007&site=ehost-live>.

⁸ Williams, “A Theology of Advocacy for Women.”

⁹ Meagan McKenna, *Leave Her Alone* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 1.

¹⁰ Delores Williams, “A Theology of Advocacy for Women,” 4-8.

2. “Back-Ground”- Includes literary Content and the Immediate Literary Content
3. “Camp-Ground” -Exegesis of the text-verses 1-2-Social and Geographical
4. “Standing-Ground”-Exegesis of the text-verses 3-4-Political and Social
5. “Sacred-Ground”-Exegesis of the text-verses 5-8-Religious
6. “Common-Ground”-Conclusion- Summary and Synthesis

Biblical Ground: Numbers 27:1-8 (NRSV)

Then the daughters of Zelophehad came forward. Zelophehad was son of Hephher son of Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh son of Joseph, a member of the Manassite clans. The names of his daughters were: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. They stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders, and all the congregation, at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and they said, ‘Our father died in the wilderness; he was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah, but died for his own sin; and he had no sons. Why should the name of our father be taken away from his clan because he had no son? Give to us a possession among our father’s brothers.’” Moses brought their case before the LORD. And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: The daughters of Zelophehad are right in what they are saying; you shall indeed let them possess an inheritance among their father’s brothers and pass the inheritance of their father on to them. You shall also say to the Israelites, ‘If a man dies, and has no son, then you shall pass his inheritance on to his daughter.’

Liz Shercliff in her book, “Preaching Women,” in the section entitled, “Hearing Bible Women,” identified four points that are useful in approaching biblical passages, which are culture, tradition, experience, and position.¹¹

Culture refers to the time of the story in the culture of the writer or reader. Tradition refers to what the Bible itself seems to say, or how it has been

¹¹ Liz Shercliff, *Preaching Women: Gender, Power and The Pulpit* (Golden Lane, London: SMC Press, 2019), 106.

interpreted through church history. Experience and position refer to whether the reader has experienced something similar to what happens in the text, or have experienced the text in some way, and the belief of what the text may be saying to the reader.”¹²

Also, in reference to writings regarding the history of women’s writings, the following questions were posed by Amy Oden, “Where were the women?” “What did they have to say?” “How did they shape the life and thought of the church?” Oden makes the argument that historically, these questions were known to go unanswered, and that these unanswered questions left the impressions in the mind of women that there were no records by women.¹³ “History,” as it has come down to us through cuneiform and hieroglyphic sources, is very much the province of the “winners”— elite males whose ideological interests were served by the “disappearing” of the voices of women and other subject peoples.¹⁴ However,

Happily, the last quarter of the twentieth century has brought increased awareness of the status, role, and contribution of women within the history of Christianity. A wealth of research on women and religion has produced new information, new readings of existing information, new methods of interpretation, and new categories of inquiry.¹⁵

This Biblical Ground that is presented will lay the foundation for “Ground-breaking Daughters.”

¹² Shercliff, *Preaching Women*, 106-107.

¹³ Amy Oden, *In Her Words: Women’s Writings in the History of Christian Thought* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 11.

¹⁴ Carole R. Fountaine, “A Heifer From Thy Stable: On Goddesses and The Status of Women in the Ancient Near East,” in *The Pleasure of Her Text: Feminist Readings of Biblical and Historical Texts*, ed. Alice Bach (Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1990), 69.

¹⁵ Oden, *In Her Own Words*, 11.

Background and Literary Content

This particular biblical text is in the book of Numbers, “and the book of numbers is the fourth of the five books that make up the Pentateuch or Torah. “The word ‘Pentateuch’ comes from two Greek words (*penta* five and *teuchos* ‘scroll case, book’) and is a designation attested in the early church fathers.”¹⁶ These collection of books are also known as, “The Five Books of Moses,” “The Law of Moses,” or simply just referred to as “The Law.”¹⁷ These books appear first in the bible partly because they belong there chronologically; they tell the story of God’s dealings with the world and with ancient Israel from the creation onward until the Israelites are poised to cross the Jordan River into the land promised to their ancestor Abraham. But the Pentateuch also appears first in the Bible because the content is theologically foundational to understanding the rest of the Hebrew Bible. Thus, the book of Numbers, even though is not well known today by comparison to Genesis or Exodus, help to provide basic religious guidance for the ancient Israelite community.”¹⁸

The title “Numbers,” comes from two different titles, which derive from the Vulgate (Vg, Numeri) and the Septuagint (LXX, Arithmoi). The Talmudic name (homes *happequddim*, meaning “the fifth of the census totals” is also related to this title of Numbers.¹⁹ A second title of, “In the wilderness” is also given to the book of Numbers

¹⁶ Tremper Longman, III, *The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 1289.

¹⁷ Longman, III, *The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1289.

¹⁸ Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe and Jacqueline E. Lapsley. *Women’s Bible Commentary*, Revised and Updated (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 56.

¹⁹ Thomas B. Dozeman, Numbers, in *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. Two, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 3.

and that title “comes from the Masoretic Text (MT), where Pentateuchal books are named either by their opening word or by a significant word in the first sentence.²⁰ One would note, that the first word in the book of Numbers is “and” and it is a continuation from the first three books of the Pentateuch. Together, “the two titles provide different points of view concerning the central themes and Structure of Numbers.”²¹

In the area of authorship, “biblical scholarship of the last 250 years has reached a broad consensus that the Pentateuch is a composite of material put together over many centuries in the life of ancient Israel and attributed to Moses only very late in its history. Although there is a disagreement about details, it seems like that the first four books of the Pentateuch received their present shape during the period called the Babylonian Exile (587-538 BCE).²² “Within Numbers itself, there is only a single reference to Moses writing activity (33:1-2). Throughout the book, however, it is noted that Moses is the recipient of the divine revelation that forms the substance of the book (e.g., 1:1; 2:1; 4:1). The fact that the book refers to Moses in the third person rather than the first person, does not invalidate Mosaic authorship (contra Gray 1903, xxix-xxx) since this reflects customary writing style in ancient times (so Harrison 1990, 23-24).²³

In the area of the literary genre of the Book of Numbers, “According to Jacob Milgrom, Numbers contains the greatest variety of literature of any book of the Bible. He list fourteen distinct genres: narrative (Num 4:13), poetry (Num 21:17-18), prophecy

²⁰ Dozeman, *Numbers*, 3.

²¹ Dozeman, *Numbers*, 3.

²² Newsom, Ringe and Lapsley, *Women's Bible Commentary*, 79.

²³ Tremper Longman, III and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction To The Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 92.

(Num 24:3-9), victory song (Num 21:27-30), prayer (Num 12:13), blessing (Num 6:24-26), lampoon (Num 22:22-35), diplomatic letter (Num 21:14-19), civil law (Num 27:1-11), cultic law (Num 15:17-21), oracular decision (Num 15: 32-36), census list (Num 26:1-51), temple archive (Num 7:10-88), and itinerary (Num 33:1-49).²⁴ “The literature, moreover, spans the history of Israel. The distinct literature within Numbers can be summarized in four stages of composition: (1) individual poetry, stories, records and law; (2) the pre-priestly history; (3) the priestly history; and (4) the canonical book of Numbers.”²⁵

In the area of structure, the book of Numbers is organized in three sections, in the area of content, as well as geographical location.²⁶ “The first section is a continuation from the book of Leviticus of the Priestly Code. The second and third sections resume the narrative of Israel’s experience in the wilderness of Sinai begun in the book of Exodus, organizing the journey in stages.”²⁷ “More Specifically, Numbers 1:1-10:10 contains various instructions and preparation for the journey from Sinai to the promise land. God gave these to the Israelites while they were still at Mount Sinai. Numbers 10:11 to 20:21 relates the failure of the Israelites to trust God while they wandered in the deserts of the Sinai Peninsula, particularly at KADESH-BARNEA in the desert of PARAN. Finally, after Israel’s forty years of wandering, 20:22-36:13 describes their preparations for

²⁴ Dozeman, *Numbers*, 8.

²⁵ Dozeman, *Numbers*, 8.

²⁶ Barry L. Bandstra, *Reading the Old Testament: Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 4th edition (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2004, 2009), 164.

²⁷ Bandstra, *Reading the Old Testament*, 164-165.

entering the promise land while they were on the plains of Moab.”²⁸ The Book of Numbers can also be viewed in the following two-part division, with chapters 1-25 being the “The Old Generation of Rebellion,” and chapters 26-36, being “The New Generation of Hope.”²⁹ One of the ultimate concerns of the book of numbers is the organizing of a new generation that has never experience persecution in the land of Egypt and this group is standing in anticipation of invading Canaan and conquering a new land. It is in this book of Numbers that the organizing of this generation involves grouping and ranking of the people, such as in the taking of the censuses and setting this generation apart from the outsiders.³⁰

In the area of the theological message in the book of Numbers, “the themes of obedience, disobedience, holiness and the presence of God are key to understanding the book of Numbers.”³¹ The themes of order, history and land are also some of the reoccurring themes that can be found in this book.³² Numbers narrates an important transition in the history of redemption as it records the death of the first wilderness generation and it’s replacement by the second generation.³³ The first part of the book of numbers is a story of sin and judgement, while the second part is positive and hopeful.³⁴

²⁸ Bill T. Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey* (Grands Rapid, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 128.

²⁹ Dozeman, *Numbers*, 3.

³⁰ Daniel Patte, *Global Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 43.

³¹ Timothy R. Ashley, *The Book of Numbers* (Grands Rapid MI: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 8.

³² W. H Bellinger, Jr., *New International Biblical Commentary: Leviticus, Numbers* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc, 2001), 173-174.

³³ Longman, III and Dillard, *An Introduction To The Old Testament*, 99.

³⁴ Longman, III and Dillard, *An Introduction To The Old Testament*, 99.

The book of Numbers, narrates the wilderness journey of the nation of Israel and their lack of trust in God and their disobedience. Despite their lack of trust in God and their disobedience, God was still faithful! ³⁵“The lesson of the book of Numbers is to trust God, and not grumble and rebel as the Israelites did. This book, then is an encouragement to rely on God in life’s struggles. On the positive side, the book of Numbers also narrates the rise of the younger generation, the generation that would, under Joshua’s leadership, enter into the promise land.”³⁶ This community that is about to engage in the settlement of this land is a purged and renewed community.³⁷

In the area of the immediate literary content, “The book of Numbers is about preparation. Everything in 1:1-10:10 prepares the nation to leave Mount Sinai, where they had been for almost eleven months. (Ex 19:1-2; Nm 10:11). But the Israelites refuse to enter the promised land in God’s timing. (10:11-20:21). So, the rest of the book (20:22-36:13) may be viewed as another preparation to enter Canaan. The second preparation was necessary because the first did not work.”³⁸

Also, in the area of the immediate literary content, the book of numbers contains two censuses where men, ages twenty and up where counted. This first census count takes place in chapter one and the second census count takes place in chapter 26. What is interesting to note is the comparison in number in the two censuses. In chapter one, there was a count of 603,550 and in chapter 26, there was a count of 601,730. “The number is

³⁵ Longman, III, *The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1222.

³⁶ Longman, III, *The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1222.

³⁷ Phillip J. Budd, *Word Biblical Commentary: Numbers*, Volume 5, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1984), 298.

³⁸ Arnold and Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament*, 130.

less than two thousand people. God had faithfully brought the ‘little ones’ to the edge of the promise land, in spite of the fears of the old rebellious generation that their ‘little ones’ would only die in the wilderness or in the conquest of Canaan.”³⁹ What follows Numbers 27, in Numbers 27:12-23, is “God’s announcement to Moses that he would die on Mount Abarim after viewing the Promised Land; that he would not live to enter it. This is followed by the appointment of Joshua, son of Nun, as Moses’s successor.”⁴⁰

Leading up to the exegetical text is Numbers 26. “Numbers 26 records a census of the whole Israelite community by families-the clans of the twelve sons of Jacob (v1). Among those named is Zelophehad, a descendant of Manasseh who bore no sons. A reference is made here, however to Zelophehad’s daughters and each of the five is named: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. “Their inclusion is unusual since women are rarely named in genealogies, and when they are, it is usually a single exception.”⁴¹ Within the Book of Numbers, women are among a group that is excluded and ostracized. These daughters of Zelophehad are no different, for they too are also restricted in the book of Numbers.⁴² It is interesting “how women are identified in the texts is key to our understanding of their role in society as well as what value society placed on them. In contrast to what one might expect, the patriarchal centuries during which the Pentateuch was produced did value women. A women’s value, however, was

³⁹ Dennis T. Olson, *Numbers*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1996), 162.

⁴⁰ Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 21-36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, in the Anchor Bible Commentary, ed. John J. Collins (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1989), 341.

⁴¹ Alice L. Laffey, *An Introduction to The Old Testament: A Feminist Perspective* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1988), 58.

⁴² Daniel Patte, *Global Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 44.

associated with certain roles of function.”⁴³ “Women are almost always identified in terms of the men who are their fathers, their husbands, or their sons, and occasionally vis-à-vis their brothers.”⁴⁴ As we have entered into the discussion of the role and status of women in the book of Numbers and also the discussion of these five daughters, we are now exiting the “Back-Ground” surrounded around these “Ground-Breaking Daughters,” and now we will enter the “Camp-Ground” of “Ground-Breaking Daughters!”

Camp-Ground: Exegesis of text-verse 1-2- Social and Geographical

Then the daughters of Zelophehad came forward. Zelophehad was son of Hephher son of Gilead son of Manasseh son of Joseph, a member of the Manaassite clans. The names of his daughters were: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. They stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders and, all the congregation, at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and they said (vs 1-2).

Before we can enter the exegesis of the text, we must define what is before the “then.” “Chapter 26 begins after the cessation of the plague that kills the remainder of the first generation of the people. The chapter recounts how, camped on the west bank of the Jordan in sight of the promised land, the member households were identified that would participate in the land grant from YHWH.”⁴⁵ “Possession of inheritable land within Israel was a major part of the covenantal promise. Land was considered to belong to YHWH and entrusted to the people of God.”⁴⁶ It is this issue of acquiring land that these daughters are presented in the biblical text. “Chapter 27 provides the narrative of the

⁴³ Laffey, *An Introduction to The Old Testament*, 10.

⁴⁴ *An Introduction to The Old Testament*, 10.

⁴⁵ John D. Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 29, no 3 (June 2002): 207-18, <https://search-ebschost-com.utsdayton.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rflh&AN=ATLA0001409508&site=ehost-live>.

⁴⁶ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad.”

daughters of Zelophehad, this story challenges the implications of the census in chapter 26 and evokes a modified ruling from YHWH.”⁴⁷ The text states that the “daughters of Zelophehad came forward.” It is interesting to note that the word “daughter” in this Hebrew text is “bane” which referring to “a son” and ‘a builder of the family.’⁴⁸ The father’s name “Zelophehad” is of significance in that, “Israel’s patriarchal society during those centuries in which the Pentateuch was produced understood the father- that is the adult male head of the family-as possessing both power and prestige.”⁴⁹ “The father may assume the primary role-or the only role-in the family or tribal decision making. In extreme cases the father as the head of the family (and the head of the wife) may also have the final say between life and death.”⁵⁰ This is the father’s name that these daughters are representing. The text states that the daughters “came forward.” “On the verb q-r-b “to approach, come forward.”⁵¹ This denotes the notion that the daughters left from their previous location of being overlooked in the giving of land, to come to this new location to ask for the land. What these “Ground-breaking Daughters,” are representing, can be considered as innovative change. “Innovative change is taking a principled tradition and enhancing it by merging an existing method with a newer, more effective approach to make the tradition more relevant and useful for the present culture and setting in which it

⁴⁷ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁴⁸ James Strong, *The Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), 20.

⁴⁹ Laffey, *An Introduction to The Old Testament*, 16.

⁵⁰ Laffey, *An Introduction to The Old Testament*, 16.

⁵¹ Levine, *Numbers 21-36*, 344.

currently exists.”⁵² Next the genealogy of their father is given and “it indicates that the legal innovation associated with the family of Zelophehad must be understood in the context in the plan for the settlement of Canaan put forth in several versions by the priestly school. To put it another way: The clan of Zelophehad truly belonged west of the Jordan.”⁵³

As the text progress, the name of the daughters is given. “The name of Zelophehad, especially the names of his daughters, warrant special attention. It is however, only in the present context of the suit brought by the daughters of Zelophehad that the full significance of their names become apparent.”⁵⁴ “Names are usually given in status order. Thus, Mahlah is first and Tirzah least, which signifies that Mahlah is the eldest. The names are usually signifiers of the nature of the persons and these names can be rendered: Mahlah (Disease), Noah (motion), Hoglah (partridge), Milcah (queen) and Tirzah (favorable).”⁵⁵ “This suggests that Mahlah either was of frail health or was born during difficult times and Noah in optimistic times. Further, the third, fourth and fifth daughters are introduced by the particle for and, but not the first two. This suggests that the latter four maybe a group, the mother Noah and her three daughters.”⁵⁶ “Another possibility is four daughters by a second wife. With these observations, daughters may

⁵² J. Elvin Sadler, *Pot Changers: Innovative Change In An Ever-changing World* (Matthews, NC: G.A.M.E Executive International Ministry Consultants, Inc, 2020), 5.

⁵³ Levine, *Numbers 21-36*, 344.

⁵⁴ Levine, *Numbers 21-36*, 344.

⁵⁵ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁵⁶ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

not be a literalism but a symbol for all non-male members of the house of Zelophehad.”⁵⁷

Another interesting discovery, as well as debate among scholars, is the credibility of whether these daughters were actual people. Being that some of the names of these daughters, particularly Noah (Zebulun), Hoglah (Judah), and Tirzah (Manasseh) are places, and that these names fit into the geographical reality of territorial units west of the Jordan, with some having had names with a feminine ending.⁵⁸

Even so, identifying the daughters with place names does not make their story a fiction or a relatively simple place etiology, because the Bible contains many instances of toponyms serving also as human proper names.⁵⁹

According to Reviv, in typical genealogical lists from the Bible, the link between a place and the social unit living in it is described in patriarchal fashion as of father to offspring, which should be regarded as a special way of thinking and writing.⁶⁰

The text continues in explanation of “who” the daughters stood before and also where they stood. They stood before Moses. “Idiomatic *amad lipne*, ‘to stand before’ usually connotes the formal stance of those appearing before God to await judgement, or those who serve him. It also designates those who stand in attendance or service before one in authority.”⁶¹ “Here the daughters of Zelophehad came before Moses and the leaders of the ‘edah’ to press their case.”⁶²

⁵⁷ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁵⁸ Zafra Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Old City of Jaffa, Israel: Archaeological Center Publications, 2006), 58.

⁵⁹ Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, 59.

⁶⁰ Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, 59.

⁶¹ Levine, *Numbers 21-36*, 344.

⁶² Levine, *Numbers 21-36*, 344.

Where the daughters stood was at the entrance of the tent of meeting. “The place of the narrative is by-the-entrance-of-the-tent-of-meeting. This is usual narrative device to mean that people gathered to ask something of YHWH.”⁶³ Just the mere fact that these women are standing at the entrance of the tent of meeting is very important. In exodus 35:1-38:20 the construction of the tabernacle includes both men and women that contributed offerings in order to build the tabernacle, “and though the tabernacle (and later the temple) is clearly associated with men, the text of Exodus 35:20-29, reveals that the women played an important part of the construction of the tabernacle as well.”⁶⁴ So for these daughters to stand in this unusual place that women do not normally stand, is significant!

In his book, *God's Leading Lady*, Bishop T.D. Jakes empowers women and instructs them on the “blocking” of their stage. Jakes states,

For women, the stage limitations have often, sadly enough, been imposed by men, out of either fear or insecurity in their own manhood or their misguided aggression and desire for control. Cultural traditions, both within and beyond the Church, have also bound women into socially accepted roles that often suppressed or ignored their multitude of talents, gifts, and offerings. While we have seen great strides made in the way our twenty-first century world greets and considers its women, some cul-de-sacs of sexism, racism, and self-righteousness will threaten to dead-end the dreams of women.⁶⁵

As “Ground-breaking Daughters,” one can glean from this advice in being one of “God’s Leading Ladies!”

If you want to be a leading lady, you must take your place in the spotlight before life slips away. Sometimes one cannot afford to wait for society’s permission to move forward, Take the limits off the stage of your life and know that true leading ladies are limited only by their own creative thought and willingness to go beyond

⁶³ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁶⁴ Laffey, *An Introduction to The Old Testament*, 56.

⁶⁵ Jakes, *God's Leading Lady*, 37.

the familiar into the extraordinary. Realize that the only barriers that shackle you are the limits that you allow to diminish your own creativity. Recognize the barriers being imposed on you and determine how to step beyond them. Face your obstacles and devise ways to work around them. Block your scenes so that you make the best use of your stage and transcend the limits that hold you back.⁶⁶

In words of this great champion for women, “All the world is your stage — step up and allow yourself to shine.”⁶⁷ The next ground that will be covered is the: “Standing-Ground!”

Standing-Ground - Exegesis of the text-verses 3-4 - Political and Social

Our father died in the wilderness; he was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah, but died for his own sin; and he had no sons. Why should the name of our father be taken away from his clan because he had no son? Give us a possession among our father’s brothers (vs 3-4).

The daughters began to speak, and they said, “our father died in the wilderness.”

“In Deuteronomy 21:15-17, it is said that property is passed on to the male heirs—the oldest son receiving a double portion. Neither widow nor daughter received any portion of the estate, but their male relatives were obligated to care for them. But what would happen in the event that there was no male heir? It is this reality that compels the daughters to take action and take the case to the divine authorities.”⁶⁸ “One could say that the daughters find themselves in an exceedingly vulnerable situation: the daughters are orphaned; the death of their male relative in the socio-cultural context of their time

⁶⁶ Jakes, *God’s Leading Lady*, 38.

⁶⁷ Jakes, *God’s Leading Lady*, 38.

⁶⁸ Juliana L. Claassens, “Give us a portion among our fathers Brothers: The Daughters of Zelophehad, land, and the quest for human dignity.” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 37, no. 3 (March 2013): 319-37. Doi;10 1177/0309089213475399.

jeopardizes their chances for survival; without land, without means to make a living, their future looks bleak.”⁶⁹ The daughters proceed with their case and they explain that “their father was not extraordinarily rebellious and paid the due penalty of the previous generation.”⁷⁰ “The essence of the upstanding character of Zelophehad is cited as not-being among the company of Korah, the rebellious one. This is stated in two parallel constructions of among the company of.”⁷¹ “The premise of the last half of Numbers is that the new generation is not rebellious and that rebellion against YHWH was what cost the forebears the loss of the promise of YHWH. Thus, the argument both admits the “ordinary” rebelliousness of Zelophehad (died-in-his-own-sin) and disclaims any extraordinary action of rebellion (such as that of Korah) that might merit additional sanctions.”⁷²

The daughter proceeds with their case and they ask the question, why should the name of our father be taken away from his clan because he had no sons? This question of “Why” is important to note because it has been suggested that one should, “always make sure to ask, why, and that generational inquiry is needed to produce innovative change.”⁷³ “We must remember that the membership in the nation of Israel for purposes of claiming a part of the Sovereign’s land grant was the presence of males over the age of 20. Thus, families with many elder sons gets more “credit” than those with few. The census has been done, and the lack of such males has meant that the house of Zelophehad does not

⁶⁹ Claassens, “Give us a portion among our fathers Brothers,” 319-37.

⁷⁰ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁷¹ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁷² Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁷³ Sadler, *Pot Changers*, xxii.

count.”⁷⁴ “The claim of the daughters is stated as an interrogative or rhetorical question, but later verses give the statement the more impressive status of a judgment or decree. The daughter’s argument does not proceed to speculate on why there were no sons. It could be construed as an accident of patrimony, or as a weakness of Zelophehad or his wife or wives, or even as a direct punishment from YHWH.”⁷⁵ The daughters have presented their case and have explained that their father was not overly rebellious and paid the price as the previous decision and did not want their father’s name taken away, just because he had no sons. “If the lack of sons was a great misfortune, how much greater would be the loss of membership?”⁷⁶ “It is important that the issue is not whether or not the daughters inherit, but whether they and their family count as Israelites and so should be awarded land by the Sovereign.”⁷⁷ “Because this question is addressed to YHWH, the daughters as petitioners are not addressing a court of the whole assembly, but directly confronting YHWH.”⁷⁸ “Give to us a possession among our father’s brothers.” The daughters proceed with their request of being given the land and they are not just focused on the inheritance itself, but rather their focused on the land grant of the Sovereign.⁷⁹ The next ground that we will cover is the “Sacred-Ground!

⁷⁴ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁷⁵ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁷⁶ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁷⁷ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁷⁸ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁷⁹ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

Sacred-Ground: Exegesis of the text-verses 5-8 - Religious

“Moses brought their case before the Lord. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, the daughters of Zelophehad are right in what they are saying; you shall indeed let them possess and inheritance among their father’s brothers and pass the inheritance of their father on to them. You shall also say to the Israelites, if a man dies, and has no son, then you shall pass the inheritance on to his daughter.” (v5-8)

“The decision is rendered in three short imperative clauses: The daughters claim is vindicated by YHWH, the daughters’ request is granted, and they are given an honorable standing in the community.”⁸⁰ “The word *dabar* is used to describe their previous act of speaking, a word suggestion more directed speech than *amar*, which had been used in v, 2 to describe their direct address. YHWH affirms their speaking as right, true, correct.”⁸¹ “There is no equivocation here but a complete affirmation of their speech. This statement is much weightier than just affirming their claim for a land grant. It affirms their argument. Indeed, it is a direct admission by YHWH that the process for determining who is of Israel in chapter 26 was not just.”⁸² “Vindicating the daughters’ confidence in a just God, YHWH does not rationalize that Moses got the procedure wrong or develop a technicality in the rules but directly proceeds to provide the just resolution.”⁸³

⁸⁰ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁸¹ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁸² Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁸³ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

“The narrator uses another repetitive construct with the verb “Nathan” “to give, grant, or bestow, to emphasize that it must be done. The daughters are to be given an “achuzzah (as they requested), which is a possession of things by gift from the Sovereign. The get “achuzzah” of an “nachalah” (inheritable thing). The bestowal given is specifically not an inheritance, but a land grant from the Sovereign.⁸⁴

“YHWH goes on to grant a further benefit. Moses is to “cause to pass” their father’s inheritance (nachalah) to them. This is statement of transference of standing, which is not used for a son, but only required for daughters that were not normally in the inheritance chain of precedence.⁸⁵ Sons were viewed as an extension of their father in the area of inheritance purposes and now this new wording and changing of the law, would make room for distinct groups, rather than just passing it on to just sons. This changing of the law is a great benefit for these daughters and now they have standing in the community as any other head of the family might have.⁸⁶ “The end of the second episode is a resounding affirmation of the daughters in three ways. First, their argument family.is approved as correct, they are counted as members of Israel as manifest by the original land grant, and they are given the right of inheritance for their family.”⁸⁷ Our final ground to cover is the “Common-Ground!”

⁸⁴ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁸⁵ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁸⁶ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

⁸⁷ Litke, “The Daughters of Zelophehad,” 207-18.

Common-Ground – Conclusion, Summary and Synthesis

In “Ground-Breaking daughters,” we have discovered that the concept of “Ground-Breaking” is, “Being or producing something like nothing done or experienced or created before.” The “Ground-Breakers” that we have studied, were the five daughters of Zelophehad, who challenged the law of the land in order to get justice and their father’s inheritance, which was not commonly given to women, but only given to men! These five daughters rallied together and went before Moses, the priest, the leaders, and the people, in order to request their rightful inheritance of the land.

There were four grounds that these daughters covered. First, there was the “Back-Ground,” where these daughters stood in the “Back-Ground,” and witnessed a census, where their names were mentioned, but not considered! Secondly, they came to the “Camp-Ground,” where they requested their rightful inheritance to Moses and the people, at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Thirdly, at the “Standing-Ground,” they stood their ground and spoke up about their rights as a people that is part of a nation, as well as their right as a daughter! Fourthly, they covered the “Sacred-Ground,” where God shows up and intervenes for them and granted the daughters their rightful inheritance, as well as changed the law, for other daughters to come! In considering these daughters, their actions represent that,

This case brings a new departure in the rights and privileges in ancient Israel. It is a small step in a patriarchal culture, but still a step towards justice. The daughters are bold and hopeful. They call upon the tradition of their people and make their case before the leaders of the camp. They take a constructive approach for the community and receive the right to inherit.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Bellinger, Jr., *New International Biblical Commentary*, 284.

In covering these four “grounds,” these “Ground-Breaking daughters,” show us how we must first show up, then we need to stand-up, then we need to speak up, and finally, we need to “sister-up!” As sisters, as women, as daughters, we need to stand as a united front! “Unity can yield courage and strength. What would have been the response of Moses and God, if only one daughter had made the request, or if two had done it? What if there had been friction among the women over the matter of inheritance, and that friction surfaced when they made their request to Moses, thus challenging the law?”⁸⁹ Things may have possibly been very different! There is power in unity! It is the covering of these particular “ground,” that has led us to the “Common-Ground!” What place of commonality do these grounds lead us to?

These “Ground-Breaking Daughters,” teach us that as women, “Women must develop the courage to achieve power for women. We must develop the stamina to persist in our efforts to unite across the racial, class, and ethnic boundaries, society has created in order to organize women’s oppression.”⁹⁰ Also, “we must learn “strategies for taking license.” That is, we must learn how to give ourselves and our group the license to change traditions, to break the taboos that imprison women. Often, even with the Bible, we have to take the license to “re-story” the story, so that women’s oppression is alleviated, so that the Gospel is as meaningful for women as it is for any other group. To “re-story” the story, means to put women’s experiences into the story so that the good news reflects the ways women imagine and receive the message of God.”⁹¹

⁸⁹ Williams, “A Theology of Advocacy for Women,” 4-8.

⁹⁰ Williams, “A Theology of Advocacy for Women,” 4-8.

⁹¹ Williams, “A Theology of Advocacy for Women,” 4-8.

The “Common-Ground” for “Ground-Breaking Daughters” and this proposed Doctor of Ministry project, “If the Shoe Fits, Wear It! Empowering Women Ministers to Walk Comfortably in Their Call to Preach,” is so that clergy women will be a united front, to encourage our selves, one another, and fight for the rights of women. Not only, fight for the rights of other women, but also to “complete” and not “compete” with our brothers in ministry. In the book, *“If It Wasn’t for The Women,”* Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin is quoted as saying, “Our woman’s movement is a woman’s movement in that it is led and directed by women for the good of women and men, for the benefit of all humanity . . . we want, we ask the active interest of our men . . . we are not alienating or withdrawing, we are only coming to the front, willing to join any others in the same work.....and inviting.....others to join us.”⁹²

It is desired, that through the undergirding of this Biblical Text and the implementation of this proposed project, that a new “Ground-Breaking” Ministry: The “C.R.O.W.N” Connection: Clergy Resource of Women Network, will break new ground, come into flourishing and grow and that clergy women will be equipped, encouraged and empowered to go to new places, meet new people and encounter new experiences and do new things in ministry, that have never been done before! Once again, Bishop Jakes, comments on the many powerful changes that women have brought about in our world! Jakes states,

I see women breaking new ground and blazing new trails in every way imaginable. Women are climbing corporate ladders at rapid speeds and ascending to the highest levels of success. They are running countries, leading with integrity

⁹² Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, *If It Wasn’t For The Women* (Mary Knoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 21.

and passion. They are launching businesses and spearheading innovations. They are excelling in the classroom, in the boardroom, and in every room!⁹³

May women from all walks of life, be empowered to fulfill the call of God on their lives, and know that “If The Shoe Fits, Wear It,” and strive to be “Ground-breaking Daughters! Thank God for all “Ground-Breaking Daughters,” past, present and in times to come!

⁹³ T.D. Jakes, *When Women Pray: 10 Women of the Bible Who Changed The World Through Prayer* (New York, NY: Faith Words Hachette Book Group, 2020), xv-xvi.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The word “Feet” carries the notion of balance, weight bearing and mobility. In consideration of the feet, the feet assist in helping one to stand. Feet helps one to balance and the feet are also very vital in helping in mobility. In considering “freedom” can be best described as the “absence of constraints!” When it comes to “freedom,” Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, refers to the term, “actual freedom” and discussion was made that “actual freedom” is one thing, but actually participating in “actual freedom can look very different. It has been suggested that what the thirteenth amendment said and how people actually respond to it is very different.¹

“Actual Freedom required more than a writ of law, for slavery was not simply a legal pronouncement, it was a way of life. It was a social system. It was a way of thinking. It was a way of treating people. More than words were required to change slavery, in fact. Indeed, the change required no simple or single thing. Abolishing the law of slavery simply shifted the appearance and forms of shackles; it did little to budge

¹ Thomas J. Davis, *History of African Americans: Exploring Diverse Roots* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2016), 113.

insistent social boundaries. So-called free negroes had demonstrated that in and outside of the south for generations before 1865.²

The idea of revolt and freedom from oppression and tyranny are as old as the Bible. Moses was sent to Egypt by God on a mission of revolt to bring freedom to the Jews who were being dominated and held in slavery by the Egyptians (Ex 5-14). The Jewish revolt for freedom, and a promised land did not take place until the powers of Pharaoh, the oppressor, was assaulted by ten plagues and their devastating consequences. Then, through miraculous and divine intervention, the Jews received their release from captivity and made their exodus to freedom.³

Whereas, the Bible gives us a portrait of a deliverer named Moses, history also gives us a portrait of another deliverer, known as the “Moses” of her people! “Any person who affects others is a leader by this definition.” “Single-minded leaders are prophets to their admirers and fanatics to their critics.”⁴

Harriet “Her” O Tubman: Feet of Freedom!

“Feet of Freedom” will chronicle the life of a historical figure leader by the name of Harriet Tubman. It is important to note, even at the onset that in reference to “actual freedom,” that it is in slavery, that Harriet Tubman learned the value of freedom, and dedicated herself to the cause of freeing others, at the hazard of losing her own freedom and even her life.⁵ “In of a profound way, Harriet Tubman’s life speaks to the praxis of freedom. It addresses itself as much to those already free-but who have yet to realize the

² Davis, *History of African Americans*, 113.

³ Carl E. Moyler, *On Freedom and Revolt: A Comparative Investigation* (San Diego, CA: Readers Magnet, LLC, 2019), 1.

⁴ Gary Wills, *Certain Trumpets: The Nature of Leadership* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Touchstone Rockefeller Center, 1994), 19, 39.

⁵ Carol V. R George, *Remember the Ladies: A New Perspective on Women in American History* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1975), 110.

fullest life for themselves in furthering freedom for others-as it does to a past when urgency was to deliver blacks from slavery. It is the quest for freedom, through the process of obtaining it that is the continuously emerging legend of Harriet Tubman.”⁶

“Slavery affected African women in a distinct way; they faced sexism, racism, and were vulnerable to sexual violence and coercion. Despite a crushing oppression, enslaved women resisted their condition by various means including escape, infanticide, suicide, and feigning sickness or pregnancy.”⁷ Harriet Tubman was indeed a brave and courageous woman who fought against the system of slavery, fled with a made-up mind, and made her way to freedom!

In ‘Feet of Freedom,’ one will embark upon a journey where one will travel in “twelve” different set of “feet, which will lead to a concluding set of feet that will undergird this project. One will explore the life and legacy of a great historical hero known as “Harriet Tubman. This movement and “Feet of Exploration” will be as follows:

- 1 “Baby Feet!”- The Birth!
2. “Bound Feet!”-Childhood & Slavery
- 3 “Spiritual Feet!”-Religious Upbringing
4. “Hurting Feet!”- Head Injury
5. “Prophetic Feet!”- Visions & Dreams!
6. Fleeing Feet!”-Escaping Slavery
7. “Free Feet!”-Freedom
8. “Mission Feet!”-Underground Railroad & Freedom Work

⁶ George, *Remember the Ladies*, 110.

⁷ Rebecca Boggs Roberts, *Women: Our Stories* (New York, NY: DK Publishing, 2019), 170.

- 9.. “One Set of Feet!”-Effort to free her sister
10. “Busy Feet!”-other areas of service
11. Final Feet!”-Record of Death
- 12.“Legacy Feet!!”-Contribution to Society!
13. Project Feet!”-Summary, conclusion & Project!

“It is said long ago that the true romance of America was not in the fortunes of the Indian, where Cooper sought it, nor in New England character, where Judd found it, nor in the social contrasts of Virginia planters, as Thackeray imagined, but in the story of the fugitive slaves. The observation is as true now as it was before War; with swift, gigantic hand, sketched the vast shadows, and dashed in the high lights in which romance loves to lurk and flash forth. But the stage is enlarged on which these dramas are played, the whole world now sits as spectators, and the desperation or the magnanimity of a poor black woman has power to shake the nation that so long was deaf to her cries. We write of one of these heroines, of whom our slave annals are full---a woman whose career is as extraordinary as the most famous of her sex can show.”⁸ This hero is none other than Araminta “Minty” Ross, better known as Harriet Tubman.

Baby Feet!

Harriet Tubman was born in Dorchester, County Maryland, around the year of 1820.⁹ The actual date of birth is unknown. Establishing actual date of birth for slaves was difficult because, “from the moment a newborn slave baby sucked air into her lungs,

⁸ Sarah Bradford, *Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People* (New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2004), 56.

⁹ George, *Remember the Ladies*, 11.

she was property, liable to sale, trade or bequeathing. Thus, as far as most white people were concerned---and they, after all, were the ones who read, wrote, governed, bought, sold, and decided---there was no reason to keep personal records distinguishing one enslaved child from another, since in every measurable way but for their marketplace value, all slaves old or young were the same.”¹⁰ In the words of Fredrick Douglass, the former abolitionist and runaway slave, who like Harriet, was a native of the Eastern Shore, lamented the ignorance of his birth, and said, “I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their age as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday. They seldom come nearer to it than planting-time, harvest-time, cherry-time, spring-time or fall-time.”¹¹

Harriet was born as Araminta “Minty” Ross, on a plantation of Anthony Thompson, south of Madison of Madison in the Parsons Creek District of Dorchester County Maryland, probably in late February or early March.¹² Minty was the fifth of nine children born to Harriet “Rit” Green and Bob Ross, who both were slaves. Rit and Ben were owned by different slaveowners. “Rit was enslaved by Edward Brodess, Anthony Thompson’s stepson, and Ben, a highly skilled timber man, belonged to Thompson, who was a wealthy and prominent landowner. The Ross family’s relatively stable life on the

¹⁰ Beverly Lowry, *A Biography: Harriet Tubman: Imagining a Life* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2007), 25.

¹¹ Kate Clifford Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land* (New York, NY: Ballantine Book, 2004), 16.

¹² Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, xvi.

Thompson plantation came to an abrupt end sometime late in 1813 or early 1824, when Edward Brodess claimed ownership of Rit and her children through the estate of his mother, Mary Pattison Brodess Thompson.¹³ “He took Rit and her five children, including Minty, away from Ben to his own farm in Bucktown, ten miles to the east. Brodess often hired Minty out to temporary masters, some of whom were cruel and negligent, while selling some of her siblings and their children illegally to out-of-state buyers, permanently fracturing the family.”¹⁴

Bound Feet!

“Slave children had every stage of childhood cut short, from nursing onward. They were propelled into adulthood by slaveholders’ impatience. Many were sent to the fields as human scarecrows as soon as they were able to walk.”¹⁵ As a child growing up young Harriet, was hired out to other households. “Slaveholders often viewed the hiring out of their slaves, even children, as an attractive alternative to selling them; hiring out of a young male could command as much as \$120 per year, much more than the interest that could be earned on the investment if the slave was sold for cash.”¹⁶ At the age of six years old, young Harriet was sold out to a man named James Cook, who would take young Harriet home to be taught the skill of weaving by his wife. Young Harriet’s mother, “Rit may even have encouraged this particular training for Minty, given the

¹³ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, xvi.

¹⁴ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, xvi.

¹⁵ Catherine Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* (New York, NY: Back Bay Books/Little Brown and Company, 2005), 16.

¹⁶ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 37.

limited range of choices for a slave child, believing that for a woman, any domestic job was preferable to one in the fields.”¹⁷ Young Harriet does not take to the skill of learning how to weave very well, so her mistress gets frustrated with her, and tells her husband that he can have Harriet, which he does and he gives young Harriet the job of catching muskrats. “Trapping muskrats would be a difficult task for a young child, but in cold water during the winter trapping season, when muskrats pelts are at their finest, it would be even more so.”¹⁸ During this job assignment, young Harriet became sick with measles and was forced to keep working the traps in the cold water, and eventually, the young child becomes so sick that she had to be sent home to her mother.¹⁹

After young Harriet recovered, once again the child, at the age of seven years old, was sold out and she was hired out to a young, married woman, named, Miss Susan. “Susan provided enough food and clothing for her enslaved people, but she had been taught that slaves would do no labor but under the “sting of the whip”.”²⁰ According to the “Essay on Woman-Whipping,” “a good many women, North as well as South, manifest a tendency to become tyrants in their own household, and love to bully their servants.”²¹ “The Southern mistress was a domestic devil with horns and claws, selfish, insolent, accustomed to be waited on for everything. She grew up with the instinct of tyranny---to punish violently the least neglect or disobedience in her servants. The

¹⁷ Lowry, *A Biography: Harriet Tubman*, 55.

¹⁸ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 38.

¹⁹ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 38.

²⁰ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 38.

²¹ Sarah H. Bradford, *Scenes in The Life of Harriet Tubman* (New York, NY: Dover’s Publishing, 2018), 58.

variable temper of girlhood, not ugly unless thwarted, became in the Southern matron, a chronic fury. She was her own “overseer,” and like that out-door functionary, had her own scepter, which she did not bear in vain.”²²

Young Harriet worked as house servant and a nurse maid for Miss Susan. One of the first task that young Harriet was given was to dust the parlor, which include sweeping the floors and dusting the furniture. According to Miss Susan’s standards, young Harriet had not completed the task to her likings, for which, she would take the whip and beat the young child viciously! Young Harriet was ordered to do the task over, and every time she would redo the task, the task was still unpleasing to Miss Susan, and there would come another beating. After, the fifth time of young Harriet completing the task and receiving a beating for them, Miss Susan’s sister, Emily heard the deafening cries of the young child, and comes in and scolds her sister for beating the child. It is interesting to note, that some research about this particular incident, records that young Harriet was screaming out as she was whipped, but another source of research, records that, “Minty cowers, but she does not cry out.”²³ Years later, as an adult, Harriet would state, “that the slaveholders who beat her never made her holler, not once.”²⁴

Emily scolds her sister for beating the child and tells her how does she expect the child to properly dust the parlor, if she has not been properly taught. Emily asks her sister to leave the child with her for a few hours, in order that she can properly teach her how to dust the parlor. Young Harriet is properly taught and completes the task to Miss Susan’s

²² Bradford, *Scenes in The Life of Harriet Tubman*, 53.

²³ Lowry, *A Biography: Harriet Tubman*, 60.

²⁴ Lowry, *A Biography: Harriet Tubman*, 60.

liking.²⁵ Young Harriet's other task for Miss Susan, was to serve as her nurse maid for her baby, where young Harriet was so small, that she had to sit on the floor, so the baby could be placed her lap, in order to hold to baby. In young Harriet's words, "An that baby was always in my lap except when it was asleep, or it's mother was feedin' it."²⁶ Along with all the other work that young Harriet had to do, she also had to stay up all night and constantly rock the baby, so that the baby would not cry! Little Harriet would be so exhausted, that sometimes she would nod off and stop rocking and the baby would start crying, which would lead to Miss Susan, pulling the whip from under her pillow and once more, little Harriet would receive a beating!²⁷ Miss Susan had a bad temper that often rose up against her husband, and on one occasion, Miss Susan and her husband was in a heated argument and during the argument, young Harriet snuck and took a lump of sugar from the bowl, and Miss Susan, turning around, caught Harriet in the act, and once again, Miss Susan reaches for the whip, but this time, the young child runs out the door and runs as fast as she could! As fast as young Harriet was running, her owners could not catch her, and she runs to the neighbor farm, where she hides in a pig pen, from Friday to Tuesday, where she fights with the pigs for food, just so she could have something to eat!²⁸

After a few days, the young child is so starved, and knowing that she had nowhere to go, she returns to her masters. When young Harriet returns, Miss Susan attempts to

²⁵ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 39.

²⁶ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 38.

²⁷ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 39.

²⁸ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 40.

once again, to whip young Harriet, but this time, little Harriet, resists being whipped and Miss Susan, waits for her husband to return home and orders him to whip the young child! The husband does not whip young Harriet at that moment, but instead, orders the child to go upstairs and roll some carpet. As young Harriet is doing her task of rolling carpet, her master comes up from behind her and beat her so bad, that he broke her ribs and lacerated her internal organs! Young Harriet is so severely injured that she can no longer work, and being half starved and badly bruised, she is once again, returned home to her mother!²⁹ “These two early childhood stories of the Cooks and Miss Susan are often conflated in the retelling of Tubman narratives. James Cook and his wife do not appear to be related to Susan and Emily. Nevertheless, cruel treatment, whippings, and beatings inflicted upon Tubman during this time period left scars “still plainly visible where the whip cut into the flesh,” forty years later.”³⁰

Even early on as a young child, it is quite clear of the strength, the will, the mindset and even the determination of young Harriet!! “In her own way, Minty has challenged the limitations and margins of the system that enslaves her. By failing to learn to weave, to dust and iron properly, and to keep her fingers out of the sugar bowl, she has successfully defied her master’s wishes, and has in this way taken for herself one of the only kinds of agency open to her, that of refusal. When they whip her, she refuses to give them the satisfaction of crying out. When they attempt to put her to work indoors, doing

²⁹ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 40.

³⁰ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 40.

what is thought of as girl's work, she botches the job magnificently, so that they have no choice but to send her outdoors, where---working beneath God's roof---she is content.”³¹

Spiritual Feet!

“Regardless of slaveholders’ repressive regime, slaves’ religion was the key to black culture in the first half of the nineteenth century, so much that one scholar has labeled it, ‘the invisible institution.’”³² “An equally decisive element in Harriet Tubman’s character was her powerful religious faith. Harriet inherited from her parents, a strong faith in God and she regarded the Divine Presence as a close friend, talking with God, “as a man talketh to his friend.”³³

“Growing from a young girl into a young woman, Araminta experienced an intensification of her Christian faith, a deep and abiding spiritual foundation that remained with her throughout her life.”³⁴ It has been suggested that due to the fact that Harriet was gravely ill during her childhood, that her mother must have spent a great deal of time by her bedside praying and filling her head with bible stories.³⁵ Due to the fact that Harriet was never taught to read or write, “all of this religious lore would have been absorbed from chapters and verses spoken to her by her parents, who were also illiterate.”³⁶ Harriet also had a strong church upbringing.

³¹ Lowry, *A Biography: Harriet Tubman*, 71.

³² Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*, 21.

³³ George, *Remember the Ladies*, 111.

³⁴ Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*, 20.

³⁵ Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*, 20.

³⁶ Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*, 20.

In this oppressive environment, then, Tubman and her family found ways to negotiate the cruelties of slavery and lack of control in their lives. Evangelical Protestant Methodism was a source of strength, blending smoothly with cultural and religious traditions that survived the Middle Passage.³⁷

Harriet's family was associated with a Methodist preacher by the name of Samuel Green, and this connection with this Methodist preacher is suggested to have had a great impact on Harriet's life.

Due to the fact that slave families were under the oppression of their slaveowners in every area of their lives, including religion, Harriet witnessed this oppression as a young child, which would spark a struggle that would impact the rest of her life. In the words of author, Adrian Ramos,

Araminta had a very conflicting relationship with the New Testament teachings of obedience, tolerance of cruelty, and generally, 'turning the other cheek,' when facing the issue of slavery. As a result, she favored Old Testament stories of struggle and salvation, which would sustain her and shape her outlook for the rest of her life.³⁸

During this time in young Harriet's life, it important to note that, "the increased attention on morality of slavery during the 1830's, 1840's and 1850's, coincided with an explosion of religious renewal that focused on spiritual freedom. Setting this movement apart from the more traditional, white-controlled Methodist Church, was the emergence of free black women preachers, including Jarena Lee, Maria Stewart, Sojourner Truth, and Zilpha Elaw, who viewed themselves as "agents with power of their own."³⁹

While black ministers were prevented from preaching, black women found white audiences and local white authorities less suspicious of them. The preaching of these women such as Lee, Elaw and Stewart, however, suggests ways that Harriet

³⁷ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 47.

³⁸ Adrian Ramos, *Harriet Tubman: Exploring the Legacy of the Underground Railroad Conductor from Beginning to End* (Coppell, TX: Sea Vision Publishing, LLC, 2020), 12-13.

³⁹ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 47-48.

Tubman experienced Christianity and sheds a light on the possible sources for her emotional and intellectual strength.⁴⁰

Tubman did not necessarily have to hear Jarena Lee, Zilpha Elaw, or Martha Stewart to share their ideologies and religious sensibilities. What is most important is what these preachers represented for women as spiritual and intellectual beings. We cannot be sure where Tubman acquired her spiritual inspiration or how she came to know scripture by heart. We can assume she experienced a spiritual awakening sometime in her adolescent years, perhaps as a natural progression of teachings heard at white Methodist services, camp meetings, at clandestine services in the woods, at Scott's Chapel in Bucktown, or in the same quarters. Religious expression was a very personal experience for Tubman.⁴¹

It was Harriet's deep religious faith that provided the yearning for freedom.

Harriet Tubman's first biographer and close friend, states "Harriet adjoined the practice of keeping a set time for prayers, preferring rather to share her problems with God as they arose, and she was confident that matters would be made right."⁴²

When invited to join in prayers with a white master's family, she preferred to stay on the landing and pray for herself. Praying for strength to make her 'able to fight,' Tubman's pleadings became her own private rebellion. Later Tubman would come to believe that her repeated attempts to retrieve enslaved blacks from the South were a holy crusade and that her God was the same God that moved Elaw, Lee, and Stewart.⁴³

It is quite clear that "God had a great work for her to do in the world, and the discipline and hardship through which she passed in her early years, were only preparing her for her after life of adventure and trial, and through these to come out as a Savior and Deliverer of her people, when she came to years of womanhood."⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 47-48.

⁴¹ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 52-53.

⁴² George, *Remember the Ladies*, 110.

⁴³ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 53.

⁴⁴ Bradford, *Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People*, 56.

Hurting Feet!

At a very young age, Harriet was drawn to the thought of being free and she was also passionate about helping others to be free. At the age of thirteen, she was sold to a family, and one day during her daily duties, she was sent to the store to buy supplies. Also present in the store that day was a young male slave, occupied by his master. While they are present in the store that day, the young man tries to escape from his master and flees. At that moment of his fleeing, young Harriet was standing in the doorway, and some sources suggest that the master insisted that Harriet help him in catching the runaway slaves, and Harriet refused and purposely blocked the door so that the young man could escape.⁴⁵ The master of the runaway slave picked up a metal weight and threw it at the young man, but the weight misses the young man and hits Harriet in the head instead. When interviewed many years later, Harriet states how she was wearing her mistress shawl over her head that day when she entered the store and, in her words, “she remembers vividly how the weight ‘broke my skull and cut a piece of that shawl clean off and drove it into my head. They carried me to the house all bleeding and fainting. I had no bed, no place to lie down at all, and they lay me on the seat of the loom, and I stayed there all the next day.’”⁴⁶ Receiving no medical attention, Tubman was returned to the field. “I went to work again and there I worked with the blood and sweat rolling down my face til I couldn’t see.”⁴⁷ Badly injured and near death, young Harriet is eventually returned home to her mother, who nursed her back to health, and to her slave owner who

⁴⁵ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 42.

⁴⁶ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 42.

⁴⁷ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 42.

tried to sell Harriet on numerous occasions, because no slaveowner wanted to purchase a wounded slave. “They said they wouldn’t give a sixpence for me,” Tubman later recalled.⁴⁸

Prophetic Feet!

From this head injury, Harriet began to suffer from narcolepsy and unconscious spells, where she would pass out for hours on end, and at times, others could not wake her. Her family referred to these episodes as “Harriet having one of her spells!”

To the abolitionist Ednah Dow Cheney, Harriet will talk about the psychic fallout from her wound, describing a day when after carrying manure with another girl all day long, she was riding on the side of the cart when she ‘heard music fill the air’ and saw a vision she described in ‘language which sounded like the old prophets in its grand flow.’ And when the other girl tried to rouse her and even when the master came over to command the young slave girl to wake up, she told him she wasn’t sleeping. Not sleeping at all. They stand back away from her!⁴⁹

Through hearsay or by interview, many testify to fact that it was after this head injury that young “Minty Ross began having visions and speaking with God on a daily basis, as directly and as pragmatically as if He were a guardian uncle whispering instructions exclusively to her and in the most concrete terms about what to do and not to do, where to go and not go.”⁵⁰

During these “spells” and unconsciousness, Harriet would usually see visions of being freed from slavery and God miraculously helping her. “Visions can be destabilizing, sometimes terrifying. Or they can lift us out of unacceptable circumstances

⁴⁸ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 42.

⁴⁹ Lowry, *Harriet Tubman: Imagining a Life*, 91-92.

⁵⁰ Lowry, *Harriet Tubman: Imagining a Life*, 91-92

into new and sometimes better world, one in which we can imagine – see – ourselves living entirely different lives.”⁵¹ As Bradford states,

[W]hen these turns of somnolence came upon Harriet, she imagines that her ‘spirit’ leaves her body and visits other scenes and places, not only in this world, but in the world of spirits. And her ideas of these scenes show, to say the least of it, a vividness of imagination seldom equaled in the soaring of the most cultivated minds.⁵²

Although tragic and traumatic as this head injury was for young Harriet, one can begin to see the glimpse of “treasure” and the “triumphant” that began to form, for this would be the onset, for Harriet’s “Mind of Freedom!”

Fleeing Feet!

Sometime has now passed, and Minty is recovering from her injuries as best as she can! After a while, she is finally able to go back to working on different plantations, and as she grows into a young lady, she is able to hire out her own self and she is able to negotiate her own wages. During these times, Minty is still having powerful visions of being free. As a young woman Minty meets and marries a free man by the name of John Tubman, which at this time that Minty Ross, takes on the name of her mother, possibly to honor her, or better yet, this name change “may have coincided with a spiritual conversion requiring the adoption of a new name.”⁵³ Others have suggested that this name change was due to the closeness of her planned escape in 1849, and therefore the

⁵¹ Lowry, *Harriet Tubman: Imagining a Life*, 92.

⁵² Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 44.

⁵³ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 62.

name change was to help assist in her escape.⁵⁴ It is at this point, that Minty Ross, will now be referred to as “Harriet Tubman.

Harriet Tubman’s life progresses, and the time has come for Harriet’s mother, Rit, to receive her freedom, due to the fact that a slave could receive freedom after a certain age. Harriet’s father, Ben, has already received his manumission and is a free man; however, due to the fact that the master refused to grant Rit her freedom, Harriet’s mother remains a slave.

This occurrence upsets Harriet a great deal and Harriet prays to the Lord, that the Lord would either change master’s heart, or that the Lord would let master die! Harriet’s prayer is heard and master dies!⁵⁵ After the master, Edward Brodess dies, the Brodess family is left in great debt and the rumor around the plantation is that the slaves will be sold off, and Harriet and her brothers, fear that they will soon be sold off. Harriet also has three sisters who had previously been separated and sold off from the family, so Harriet and her brothers, make up in their minds, that they will not be sold off and plans of escape are set in motion!⁵⁶

Free Feet!

The day of escape came, and Harriet and her brothers set out to escape slavery! As Harriet and her brothers, proceeded in their plan to escape, they would get to a certain point of escape, fear would set in for the brothers, never for Harriet, and the brothers

⁵⁴ Hourly History, *Harriet Tubman: A Life From Beginning to End* (United Kingdom: Hourly History Publishing, 2017), 14-15.

⁵⁵ Lowry, *A Biography: Harriet Tubman*, 127.

⁵⁶ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 74.

would eventually, change their minds and turn back, taking Harriet with them!⁵⁷ This would occur several times. However, one night, the day of escape for Harriet would finally come, and this time, Harriet makes up her mind, that she will not turn back, and Harriet leaves behind her father, her mother and her siblings and Harriet sets her sights of going after freedom!

Threaten with the possibility of being sold off, “Tubman, in her early twenties, confronted the possibility of abandoning her parents, her husband and the Eastern Shore – the only place she had called home.”⁵⁸ Harriet’s three sisters had previously disappeared from acts of being sold off, and now Harriet feels the need to leave before she herself is sold off! In the words of Harriet Tubman, “I had reasoned this out in my mind; there was one of two things. I had a right to liberty or death; if I couldn’t have one, I would have the other.”⁵⁹ “So, one night she walked off and used her strength and craft, which were great, to make her way to Philadelphia.”⁶⁰

Although, the journey to freedom was determined, it did not come easy and Harriet spent many cold nights, traveling by foot and spent many days hiding out in the daytime! During the escape, Harriet would receive much help and assistance by conductors of the underground railroad, who would hide Harriet until she could safely move on! After many days and three hundred plus miles traveling by foot, Harriet finally crosses the Pennsylvania line into freedom, and in her words, Harriet says, “Everything

⁵⁷ Larson, *Bound for The Promise Land*, 78.

⁵⁸ Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*, 32.

⁵⁹ Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* 32.

⁶⁰ Lowry, *Harriet Tubman: Imagining a Life*, 138.

becomes new. Even the light seems to change. I felt like I was in heaven.”⁶¹ However, as soon as Harriet is free, she immediately feels the chains of slavery all over again! “I had crossed the line,” she will tell Bradford. “I was free, but there was no one to welcome me to the land of freedom. I was a stranger in a strange land.”⁶² It is at that moment, that Harriet makes up her mind with this thought! “She has no right to individual freedom while others – those who are a part of her and those whose presence her life belongs – are bound. Since she is free, so should her family be.”⁶³

Mission Feet!

While Harriet is free in Philadelphia, she works tirelessly doing odd jobs just so that she can make her way back to Maryland so that she might lead her family to freedom. This pivotal point in Harriet’s life will lead to her work with the Underground Railroad. “The Underground Railroad, in the context of American history, refers to the secret, loosely organized network of people and the hiding spaces they used to guide slaves to freedom in the free states or Canada.”⁶⁴

While its legendary status during the antebellum period has become commonplace in American history, the history of the system actually dates back to the colonial period, when Native Americans aided the escape of African slaves on the frontier of planter society. Even so the success of the Underground Railroad in securing the freedom of thousands of slaves during the plantation period stands as a testament to the strength of its participants and the enduring nature of its spirit.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Lowry, *Harriet Tubman: Imagining a Life*, 151.

⁶² Lowry, *Harriet Tubman: Imagining a Life*, 151.

⁶³ Lowry, *Harriet Tubman: Imagining a Life*, 152.

⁶⁴ Jessie Carney Smith and Linda T. Wynn, *Freedom Facts and Firsts: 400 Years of the African American Civil Rights Experience* (Canton, MI: Visible Ink Press, 2009), 73.

⁶⁵ Smith and Wynn, *Freedom Facts and Firsts*, 73.

It is through the use of the Underground Railroad that Harriet makes her way back to the south, where she helps to free many members in her family, including her mother and her father. It is at this time that Harriet is known by the name “Moses” because of her brave and daring rescues. Harriet was even known to carry a pistol during her rescues and threaten to shoot those who wanted to return to slavery. Not only did Harriet acquire freedom for herself and her family, but Harriet is credited to help over seventy individuals to freedom. Harriet is also credited to have assisted nearly 300 slaves in obtaining freedom! Her work with the Underground Railroad was so daring, dangerous, and even detrimental to the system of slavery that, “Maryland planters reportedly offered a total of \$40,000 for her capture. William Still, a black leader of Philadelphia’s Underground Railroad, said that “in point of courage, shrewdness, and disinterested exertions to rescue her fellowman, she was without equal.”⁶⁶ With her many successful trips to freedom for other slaves, Harriet became one of the powerful conductors of the Underground Railroad! “Harriet Tubman was not only determined to free enslaved African Americans but to also abolish the system of slavery.”⁶⁷ “Harriet kept returning to Maryland, methodically removing the foundation of slavery a few people at a time.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *Slavery and the Making of America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 118.

⁶⁷ Victoria Pope and Christine Schrum, *Smithsonian American Women: Remarkable Objects and Stories of Strength, Ingenuity, and Vision From The National Collection* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2019), 51.

⁶⁸ Dorothy Wickenden, *The Agitators: Three Friends Who Fought for Abolition and Women’s Rights* (New York, NY: Scribner, 2021), 114.

One Set of Feet!

Harriet would work for many years, as a conductor on the Underground railroad, and although she worked tirelessly and risked her life to free others, there was one particular pair of feet that Harriet was after, and that was the feet of her sister, Rachel! Rachel and her two children remained in slavery back in Maryland, and on many occasions, Harriet would try and persuade her sister to try and escape to freedom. However, for fear for herself and her children, Rachel refused to run! Harriet finally, made the decision to rest her “rescuing feet,” and planned one last trip to Maryland in order to free her sister and her children! However, when Harriet finally makes the trip back to Maryland, she was met with the news that her sister, Rachel had died, and the children had been sold in slavery! The feet of her sister were the main feet that Harriet desired to free, but those feet died being bound in slavery! Harriet would have to leave Maryland without the feet of her sister or her nieces!

Busy Feet!

After Harriet, retires her “rescuing feet,” she continues with “Busy feet,” where she walks in the feet of a recruiter, a scout, and a spy in the Union Army and from walking in these set of feet, she become known as “General Tubman!” Harriet would become the only woman to lead a group of soldiers into an armed assault.⁶⁹ Also, in walking in “Busy Feet,” Harriet worked as a nurse in helping to care for soldiers that were wounded. “She was formally commended by the secretary of War and at least five high-ranking union officers for her two years’ work in the sea islands as a nurse and a

⁶⁹ University Press, *Harriet Tubman: The Biography* (Monroe, IL: University Press, 2020), 42.

daring scout.”⁷⁰ “She traveled to South Carolina as a nurse and teacher for the abandoned Gullah people, as well as to Florida, where she taught newly freed blacks how to become self-sufficient.”⁷¹ “A member of the National Association of Colored Women and the National Federation of Afro-American Women, Tubman supported the suffrage movement and was an advocate for the elderly. Her lifelong dream, a Home for the Aged and the Indigent Colored People, opened in 1908.”⁷²

In the area of ministry, Harriet would even stand with “Preaching Feet,” where she would speak at different women’s events and organizations!

Attending countless rallies and lectures, she used a combination of her oratory skills and stories of her exploits to great effect. Her stories, while very personal, held an element of collective achievement for the people she was categorized with. She was a symbol of what black people and women could accomplish, and she tried to remind her younger peers of that.⁷³

Final Feet!

In her latter days, Harriet worked tirelessly in the home that she opened up for the poor and elderly, and as her health began to deteriorate, she would soon become a resident in the very home that she worked to open. In the year of 1913, on March 10th, at the age of ninety-one, Harriet Tubman died of pneumonia.⁷⁴

Within days, hundreds of people, Auburnians and outsiders alike, came to hold services at the Harriet Tubman Home and then at the AME Zion Church. A

⁷⁰ David W. Blight, “The Age of Emancipation,” in *A History of the African American People*, eds. James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton (New York, NY: Smithmark Publishers, 1995), 78.

⁷¹ Smith and Wynn, *Freedom Facts and Firsts*, 254.

⁷² Smith and Wynn, *Freedom Facts and Firsts*, 254.

⁷³ Ramos, *Harriet Tubman*, 91.

⁷⁴ Julia McDonnell, *Harriet Tubman: in her own words* (New York, NY: Garth Stevens Publishing, 2016), 26.

stream of eulogies from notable members of the church and community unanimously praised Harriet as she was taken to Fort Hill Cemetery and buried in a plot of land already shared by her brother William Henry and his family.”⁷⁵

This brave and courageous woman was buried with military honors.⁷⁶

Legacy Feet!

Harriet Tubman was truly a brave, determined, and a powerful woman that affected change in her life and also in the lives of others! This great woman truly left a lasting mark in history and walked boldly in many different sets of feet, that has left behind a legacy that many others are walking in today! “Many school buildings, and memorials carry her name. Learning centers and museums educate visitors about her incredible story. Harriet Tubman was the first African American woman honored with an official US stamp. Underground Railroads sites have been preserved in her honor. And shelters and hospitals for the needy continue the efforts she began late in life, which is called “her last work.”⁷⁷ “By 2028, a new \$20 bill will bear her likeness, a fact that resulted in intense controversy over what picture of her to put on the bill.”⁷⁸

“Sometimes, in this world, the blessed person knows without a doubt why he or she is on this earth. Harriet Tubman knew that God had called her to deliver her people from a cruel fate at the hands of terribly misguided people. She knew God wanted her

⁷⁵ Ramos, *Harriet Tubman*, 110.

⁷⁶ Joan Potter, *African American Firsts: Famous, Little-known, and Unsung Triumphs of Blacks in America* (New York, NY: Dafina Books, 2014), 109.

⁷⁷ McDonnell, *Harriet Tubman*, 28.

⁷⁸ University Press, *Harriet Tubman: The Biography*, 66.

people free and that she was to be the instrument to get them to freedom.”⁷⁹ “Harriet Tubman is a “Hero” in every sense of the word! “She was a slave, runaway, abolitionist, spy, nurse, women’s rights activist, and education supporter. Rising from humble slave beginnings to become one of the most courageous and generous women of her time, her work continues to inspire people today.”⁸⁰

Project Feet!

We have just taken a journey with Harriet Tubman in “Feet of Freedom,” where we have just experienced twelve different set of feet that describes this remarkable woman’s life to us in a very powerful way! “Baby Feet” described her birth. “Bound Feet” took us on a journey through her upbringing and slavery. “Spiritual Feet,” took us on a journey through her religious upbringing. “Hurting Feet,” provided the journey through her head injury! “Prophetic Feet” provided the journey through visions and dreams. “Fleeing Feet” provided the journey of the escape from slavery. “Free Feet” provided the journey to freedom! “Mission Feet” provided the journey of the work of freedom and the Underground Railroad. “One set of feet” provided the journey of the desire for freedom of Harriet’s sisters and nieces! “Busy Feet” provided the journey through the busy life of Harriet Tubman and all the other areas that she walked in! “Final Feet” provided the journey through the last days and death of Harriet Tubman! And lastly, “Legacy Feet” provided the journey through the incredible legacy, that Harriet

⁷⁹ Tricia Williams Jackson, *Women in Black History: Stories of Courage, Faith, and Resilience* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2016), 44.

⁸⁰ McDonnell, *Harriet Tubman*, 28.

Tubman left behind! And now, these twelve sets of feet, will finally lead us to “Project Feet!”

Project Feet! Continued

From these twelve sets of feet that we have just journeyed through, I would like to extract a particular pair of feet, for which a proposed Doctor of Ministry Project will stand upon. In “one set of feet,” it was the desire for Harriet Tubman to free her sister, Rachel from the bondage of slavery! Out of all the sets of feet that Harriet Tubman was able to free, this was one pair of feet that she was not able to free! Harriet Tubman could have very well have just been satisfied with her own set of “Free Feet,” but she was also concerned about the “bound feet” of her sister! As women in ministry, “we need to be the Harriet Tubman’s of Ministry and go back and get another sister!”⁸¹ The proposed project entitled: “If the Shoe Fits, Wear it: Empowering Women to comfortably walk in their call to Preach,” will be designed to empower women in ministry, to walk comfortably and confidently in the call to preach! Preaching is a male dominate field and as women who have been called to preach, we face some unique challenges, that men do not normally face! The project will be designed in such a way, that women in the preaching ministry will be able to come together and share their challenges and struggles with one another, receive some support from other women in ministry and also be provided with some powerful and practical tools, that will help the woman preacher, to comfortably walk in her call to preach! The intended and end all goal of the project is that the women will

⁸¹ This comment was made by an unnamed participant in the Charles Booth Conference. See Bridget Weatherspoon, “Leading Women form Trauma to Triumph,” Seminar, Charles Booth Conference, September 14, 2021.

enter into the project one way and exit the project with a greater sense of empowerment that will help them to walk more comfortably in their call to preach! Lastly, to all my “Preaching Sisters,” “If The Shoe Fits, Wear It! Put on your preaching shoes and go forth and do what thus says the Lord!

“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world!”⁸²

⁸² Hourly History, *Harriet Tubman*, 17.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

In our society today, shoes come in various sizes, colors, shapes, and styles. The notion of wearing shoes, usually carries with it the ideal of mobility, comfort, and purpose. Just as there are different styles of shoes, for different occasions, there are also different types of theologies that address different trains of thought!

Theology can be defined as,

a methodical investigation and interpretation of the content of Christian faith, the orderly clarification and explanation of what the Christian message affirms. From another angle, theology is an activity or function of the Christian church carried out by members of the church. It is faith seeking understanding, through which the church in every age reflects on the basis of its existence and the content of its message.¹

From yet another angle, theology is “faith seeking the clarity of its cause.”² That is, it is reflection of Christian life amid struggles for freedom or liberation, for the full humanity of all persons, and for the transformation of human persons and societies as manifestations of and in expectation of the reign of God.”³ However, from another angle, as well as from a more simple angle, “theology is a seeking after understanding – a

¹ Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology*, 3rd ed. (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), 1.

² Thomas and Wondra, *Introduction to Theology*, 1.

³ Thomas and Wondra, *Introduction to Theology*, 1.

process of thinking about life in the light of the faith that Christians engage in because of their calling.”⁴ It has been said that, “to be Christian at all is to be a theologian. There are no exceptions.”⁵

In the area of theology, there is also theological reflection, and theological reflection “involves working with various materials or resources, applying certain skills which can be learned and honed over time by concentration and practice.”⁶ Furthermore, “to engage in theological reflection is to join in an ongoing conversation with others that began long before we ever came along and will continue long after we have passed away.”⁷ The suggestion has been made that theological reflection can be intimidating and unmanageable at times.⁸

Since theological reflection can be a demanding task, theologians often go off to work alone in peace and quiet. Scholars work in the library, pastors in their studies, Churches hold retreats where their members can contemplate and discuss faith away from the hubbub of daily life. Christians rise early or stay up late to make times for themselves to read scripture, pray, and meditate on the Word. Whenever or wherever it occurs, theological reflection is not only a personal but also an interactive, dialogical, and community-related process. The voices of others are heard. Some of these voices, like those of the biblical writers, come from texts of centuries past. Others are those of our contemporaries. Still, others are our own. These voices offer us food for thought, so to be heeded or debated or improved upon or set aside as unhelpful.⁹

⁴ Howard W. Stone and James O. Duke, *How To Think Theologically*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 2.

⁵ Stone and Duke, *How To Think Theologically*, 2.

⁶ Stone and Duke, *How To Think Theologically*, 2.

⁷ Stone and Duke, *How To Think Theologically*, 2.

⁸ Stone and Duke, *How To Think Theologically*, 3.

⁹ Stone and Duke, *How To Think Theologically*, 4.

It is these different, and sometimes competing, voices of theology that will spark this conversation of theology.

Shoes of Theology

The section “Shoes of Theology” follows in the steps of “Feet of Freedom” in that it is focused on a historical look in the life of Harriet Tubman. “Shoes of Theology” falls in the framework of: “If The Shoe Fits, Wear It: Empowering Women Ministers in their call to preach!” The proposed hypothesis for this project is that “when women ministers engage with one another in their struggles in the preaching ministry, they will then feel empowered to walk more comfortably in the preaching ministry! The context will be the United Missionary Baptist church in Dayton, Ohio, and within the center of the context, will be a group of eight to ten clergy women, who are currently walking in preaching ministry.

In “Shoes of Theology,” one will examine four different shoes of theology, that will be categorized into two different sections, which will include “Men Shoes,” and “Women Shoes.” In the men’s section, we will examine Liberation Theology and Black Theology. In the women’s section, we will examine Feminist Theology and Womanist Theology. Furthermore, within these four different “shoes of theology,” we will examine five different areas to include: (1). Definition, we will define the particular, “Shoe of Theology.” (2.) Formation, we will look at when the particular “Shoe of Theology,” was made. (3) Key Figure(s), we will look at who made the particular “Shoe of Theology. (4.) Key Purpose, we will look at why the shoe was made. Lastly, (5) Location, we will look at where the shoe is walking today. In conclusion, we will summarize the four different

“Shoes of Theology,” and we will examine how these particular “Shoes of Theology,” fit into the “shoe closet” of our context.

Men’s Section: Liberation Theology

Within the men’s section, the first “Shoe of Theology,” that we will walk in is Liberation Theology. Liberation Theology can be defined as: “A social and political movement within the church that attempts to interpret the Gospel of Jesus Christ through lived experiences of oppressed people.”¹⁰ Liberation Theology began in Latin America, in the Mid 1950’s as a socio-economic development that pushed peasant workers and farm workers populations into desperate poverty. Along with the economic unrest, came political unrest, and the military dictators took over many governments in the name of national security.¹¹

The key figure with this particular “Shoe of Theology,” is Gustavo Gutierrez, who has been considered the father of Liberation Theology. Gutierrez does not like being referred to as the father of Liberation Theology, because Gutierrez, “believes the theology of liberation is a project of the people, ordinary Christians who apply their faith and teachings of the Bible to the historical context in which they live.”¹² Gutierrez was born in Lima, Peru, and as a young boy, he spent most of his teenage years in bed sick with polio and from that experience, he was motivated to train for a career in medicine;

¹⁰ Kira Dault, “What is Liberation Theology?” <https://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201410/what-is-liberation-theology/>.

¹¹ Dault, “What is Liberation Theology?”

¹² Read The Spirit: Interfaith Peacemakers, “The Father of Liberation Theology,” <https://readthespirit.com/interfaith-peacemakers/gustavo-gutierrez-liberation-theology/>.

but after some time, he decided to become a Roman Catholic priest instead.¹³ Gutierrez soon discovered that the formal training that he received in Europe did not equip him to deal with the needs of the poor in Latin America.¹⁴ Gutierrez felt that these three discoveries were of great importance.

First, instead of seeing poverty as a “virtue,” or at least something to be accepted by Christians, he came to see poverty as something to be accepted by Christians, he came to see poverty as something destructive that must always be opposed. Second, instead of seeing poverty as the result of laziness or bad luck, he came to see it not as accidental but structural, something that society conspires to ensure, so that there will always be enough poor people to keep wages down. Third, instead of accepting poverty as inevitable, he came to see that the poor were a social class and could organize to bring about change.¹⁵

According to Gutierrez, “Rereading the Bible in the course of these three discoveries, he realized that the God of the Bible makes “a preferential option for the poor,” rather than (as the institutional church so often implied) for the rich. God loves all persons, but has a special concern for the victims, and sides with them in their struggle for justice. The true concern of the Bible and Christian tradition, Gutierrez came to feel, is the promise of liberation, a three-fold liberation from unjust social structures, from the sense of fate, and from personal guilt.”¹⁶ In the area of the key purposes of liberation theology, “the main themes of liberation theology are congruent with the themes of the Christian tradition, save that they are always seen “from the underside of history,” namely, from the perspective of the poor and oppressed. There has been “an eruption of

¹³ Browse Biography, “Gustavo Gutierrez,” 2020, www.browsebiography.com/bio-gustvoguitierrez.html.

¹⁴ Browse Biography, “Gustavo Gutierrez.”

¹⁵ Browse Biography, “Gustavo Gutierrez.”

¹⁶ Browse Biography, “Gustavo Gutierrez.”

the poor” challenging the unjust structures of society and the church either becomes a defender of the status quo rather than the champion of its victims. God is the God of the poor. Jesus Christ is the “God of the poor” in a Galilean carpenter, and the Holy spirit is the power of God on the side of transformation.”¹⁷

Where does this particular “Shoe of Theology” stand today? “as liberation theology picked up steam and support. Its relationship with the Vatican and the Church hierarchy became chilly and sometimes hostile. In 1984 the congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, led at the time by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, condemned Liberation Theology because of its Marxist principles and its association with political movements.”¹⁸ “Pope Francis himself had a rocky relationship with the movement when he was in Argentina, clashing with some of his fellow Jesuits who wanted to confront Argentina’s violent military dictatorship, Today, however the Vatican seems to be warming to Liberation Theology.”¹⁹

Men’s Section: Shoes of Black Theology!

The next “Shoe of Theology,” that will examine in the men’s section is the “Shoe of Black Theology.” Definitionally, “Black Theology believes that God of freedom has created African Americans to be free-to reach their full potential without obstacles blocking the goal of becoming human beings who can freely do God’s will. And through Jesus Christ’s liberation, message, and presence, God has provided a way for the church

¹⁷ Browse Biography, “Gustavo Gutierrez.”

¹⁸ Browse Biography, “Gustavo Gutierrez.”

¹⁹ Browse Biography, “Gustavo Gutierrez.”

to move toward that freedom.”²⁰ “Black Theology considers the following question: What does it mean to be black and Christian for a people situated in the midst of American racism and called by God to be full human beings?”²¹ “In a society where persons are oppressed because they are black, Christian Theology must become black theology, a theology that is unreservedly identified with the goals of the oppressed and seeks to interpret the divine character of their struggle for liberation.”²²

Black theology is a phrase that is particularly appropriate for contemporary America because of its symbolic power to convey both what whites mean by oppression and what blacks mean by liberation.²³

Black Theology, therefore, is an effort of African people to claim their blackness and their freedom as people of God. Freedom comes when black poor folk, led by the African American Church, live out their freedom because God helps them in their daily struggle against personal pain and collective oppression.²⁴

A major aspect of black Christian belief is found in the symbolic importance given to the word “freedom.” Throughout black history the term “freedom” has found a deep religious resonance in the lives and hopes of African Americans.²⁵

In the area of formation, “Black Theology has its roots in liberation theology, which began to spread in the progressivism era of the late nineteenth century with a focus

²⁰ Dwight Hopkins. “Introducing Black Theology of Liberation,” EBSCO Publishing, <https://www.equip.org/article/whats-wrong-with-black-theology/>.

²¹ Hopkins, “Introducing Black Theology of Liberation.”

²² James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation, Twentieth Anniversary Edition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), v.

²³ Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, v.

²⁴ Hopkins, “Introducing Black Theology of Liberation.”

²⁵ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in The African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 4.

on so-called social justice.”²⁶ “James Cone is probably the most well-known expositor of black theology. Born in 1938, Cone grew up when racial segregation was legal, and his experiences shaped how he viewed God and the Bible”²⁷ Cone said, “the spirit of oppression “alone must be the ultimate authority in religious matter” and so he interpreted scripture through a radical lens. For the gospel to be relevant to blacks, Cone contended it must emphasize liberation of the poor and oppressed as Christ was liberator of the oppressed.”²⁸

The symbol that James Cone sees as preeminent of Black theology,

[I]s the God/Christ of the liberation struggle. The black Christ who is the unique revelation of a Black God. God as Creator, and Jesus Christ as Liberator, are the symbols that provide hermeneutical principle or norm for Black Theology.²⁹

It is a norm ‘which is in harmony with the Black condition and the biblical revelation.’ It is a norm that pays attention to the encounter of the Black community with God’s emancipative grace and that springs forth from it.³⁰

The purpose of Black Theology is to recognize the fact that “to be black and Christian together is to accept a specific calling and that is to struggle against forces that would block being black in the world and against the obstacles preventing African American from achieving their full individual and group humanity, which God has created them to reach. At the same time, and even more importantly, it means having a faith in a movement for individual and systematic liberation, a liberation that is the final

²⁶ LaShawn Barber, “What’s Wrong with Black Theology?,” <https://www.equip.org/article/whats-wrong-with-black-theology/>.

²⁷ Barber, “What’s Wrong with Black Theology?”

²⁸ Barber, “What’s Wrong with Black Theology?”.

²⁹ Diana L. Hayes, “James Cone’s Hermeneutic of Language and Black Theology,” *Theological Studies* 61 (2000): 614, <https://cdn.theologicalstudies.net/61/61.4/61.4.1pdf>.

³⁰ Hayes, “James Cone’s Hermeneutic of Language and Black Theology,” 614.

work that God and oppressed people will carry out their full humanity.³¹ “Black Theology recognizes that God, through Jesus Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit, works with the poor as they learn to love themselves enough to practice their total freedom and create their full humanity on earth as it is in heaven.”³²

Cone's theology, Black theology, is a “passionate language” because it is a language of survival expressed as “God-talk,” a theology that translates into hope for the future. It is a theology committed in hope, a hope that it preaches as a revolutionary hope, a hope that overthrows the powers and principalities of this world in favor of those who are unwanted, unthought of, unloved.³³

Today, different “Shoes of Theology,” are forming in the area of Black Theology and one of those shoes is Woke Theology that looks at different areas and beliefs of Black Theology, such as Black theology thinks black people are uniquely favored by God, Woke Theology does not.³⁴

Women's Section: Shoes of Feminist Theology!

The first “Shoe of Theology” that we will examine in the women's section is the “Shoe of Feminism.” “Feminism is a worldwide phenomenon that has taken many forms and that mean different things to different people. Feminism is a social vision, rooted in women's experience of sexually based discrimination and oppression, a movement

³¹ Hopkins, “Introducing Black Theology of Liberation.”

³² Hopkins, “Introducing Black Theology of Liberation.”

³³ Diana L. Hayes, “James Cone's Hermeneutic of Language and Black Theology,” 627.

³⁴ Samuel Sey, “Black Liberation Theology and Woke Christianity,” May 5, 2018, <https://slowtowrite.com/black-liberation-theology-and-woke-christianity/>.

seeking the liberation of women from all forms of sexism, an academic method of analysis being used in virtually every discipline.”³⁵

For some it is a commitment to social, political, and economic equality and dignity for women and a commitment to combat injustice and discrimination against women. For others, it is a positive affirmation of women’s experiences; it is a sense of spiritual or emotional solidarity with or loyalty to women. For others, it is the discovery and valuing of a distinctly ‘female’ approach to being human.³⁶

Feminism is all these things and more because it is a perspective on life that colors all of a person’s hope’s, commitments, and actions. Feminism has been given a variety of broad and narrow definitions since the 1960’s. Joanne Wolski Conn’s defines feminism as, “both a plan of action, rooted in women’s critical awareness of how a culture controlled in meaning and action by men, for their own advantage, oppress women and dehumanizes men.”³⁷

“Feminist Theology has developed, particularly since the 1970’s, as a special field of inquiry within departments of theology and religious studies. With great number of women entering higher education and preparing for a variety ministry within the Christian Churches at that time, it is not surprising that traditional disciplines of all kinds were being reshaped according to new questions and concerns that appeared.”³⁸

While feminist theology is new, it is also very old – ever since Eve, every time a woman protested the way the Bible or church described her and her place was an event of feminist theology. Theology is ‘talking about God.’ Feminist theology is

³⁵ Anne M. Clifford, *Introduction to Feminist Theology* (New York, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 17.

³⁶ Cynthia Campbell, *Theologies Written From Feminist Perspectives: An Introductory Study* (New York, NY: OGA Sales, 1987), 9.

³⁷ Clifford, *Introduction to Feminist Theology*, 17.

³⁸ Clifford, *Introduction to Feminist Theology*, 8.

talking about God from the perspective of women who believe they also are made in the image of God-equally human.³⁹

Some of the key figures of this movement are “Rosemary Ruether, a Catholic growing up in an ecumenical context and Letty Russel as a Presbyterian followed somewhat parallel paths. Both were deeply shaped by participation in the Civil rights and Anti-war movements of the 1960’s.” Other include Sallie Mcfague, Beverly Harrison, and Carter Heyward.”⁴⁰

Some of the key purposes of Feminist Theology are “The Structural Injustice of Sexism. According to feminism, human community is characterized by a basic structural injustice, a distorted relationality between the sexes, such that men group have power over women as a group.”⁴¹ Another key purpose is: The Grounding of Theology in Women’s Experience. “All history is done since based on experience, whether that is acknowledged or not. Most theologies in the past have been done almost inclusively from the perspective of male experience. Men have been those who have written, taught and preached about the meaning of faith, and women may have been excluded from such offices and opportunities that would have allowed them to study the faith.”⁴²

Another area of purpose is “listening and teaching for difference.” “The need to extend the notion of women’s experience beyond simplistic assumptions of an understanding of an undifferentiated unity of all women everywhere leads to the

³⁹ Val Webb, *Why We’re Equal: Introducing Feminist Theology* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1999), 95-96.

⁴⁰ Susan Frank Parson, *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology* (New York, NY: Cambridge University, 2002), 5.

⁴¹ Nicola Slee, “Introduction Feminist Theology,” <https://thechristianstudentguide.com/article/introduction-feminist-theology/>.

⁴² Slee, “Introduction Feminist Theology.”

formation of this principle.”⁴³ “Feminist theology challenges the way those in power have told the story for centuries and suggests we look at the same statue of the strong man Hercules from the perspective of the one overpowered and silenced – in this case women.”⁴⁴

Lastly, in the area of purpose is “Commitment to the Liberating and Empowering Women.” “Theology must not be isolated in the ivory tower of academia but must take root in the streets and the homes of every woman and man and must be oriented to the transformation of society and particularly to the liberation and empowerment of women.”⁴⁵

Where do these shoes of theology stand at today? Some of the areas that feminism is addressing today are: Gay, lesbian, transgender and queer experience and critiques, ecology, colonization, colonization and post-colonial work, the churches response to abuse and trauma, class inequality, racism, lack of communication between women of different races, languages and countries and non-hierarchical, collective work and decision making.⁴⁶

⁴³ Slee, “Introduction Feminist Theology.”

⁴⁴ Webb, *Why We're Equal*, 95.

⁴⁵ Slee, “Introduction Feminist Theology.”

⁴⁶ Marissa Sotos, “What is Feminist Theology?,” queergrace.com/feminist-theology/.

Women's Section: Shoes of Womanist Theology!

Womanist Theology is, “a theory and practice of inclusivity, accenting gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and ecology.”⁴⁷ Furthermore, “Womanist theology is a critical reflection upon black women’s place in the world that God has created and takes seriously black women’s experiences as human beings who are made in the image of God.

Womanist theology is an opportunity to state the meanings of God in the real time of black women’s lives. Womanist theology explores the magic of black women’s religious meaning-worlds, in all the various forms. Historical and cultural realities, from black women’s perspectives, also need expression in theological terms. Womanist theology brings unstated assumptions about black women to a place where they can be explored, refined, and celebrated or debunked.⁴⁸

“The categories of life which black women deal with daily (that is, race, womanhood, and political economy) are intricately woven into the religious space that African American women occupy.”⁴⁹ “Womanist theology challenges all oppressive forces impeding black women’s struggle for survival and for the development of a positive, productive quality of life conducive to women’s and the family’s freedom and well-being. Womanist theology opposes all oppression based on race, sex, class, sexual preference, physical disability and caste.”⁵⁰ “Womanist theology assumes a liberatory

⁴⁷ Linda E. Thomas, “Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm,” *Cross Current* 48, no 4 (1998): 488-99, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24461012>.

⁴⁸ Stephanie Y. Mitchem, *Introducing Womanist Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 60.

⁴⁹ Thomas, “Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm,” 488-99.

⁵⁰ Yolanda Y. Smith, “Womanist Theology: Empowering Black Women Through Christian Education,” (Dissertation, Yale Divinity School, Connecticut, New Haven, 2008), 201-202.

perspective so that African American women can live emboldened lives within the African American community and within the larger community.”⁵¹

Womanist Theology can be associated with Black Theology as well as Feminist Theology. “Although, womanist theology has drawn insights from both feminist theology and black theology, neither one of these perspectives has been able to fully address the concerns of African American Women.”⁵² Therefore, “Womanist Theology associates with and disassociates itself from black (male) theology and (white) feminist theology.”⁵³ Black Theology has an emphasis on race, whereas Feminist Theology focuses on the oppression of women, and this focus is primarily geared towards white women.⁵⁴ “As important as the work of feminist theology has been, its shortcoming is its lack of attention to the everyday realities of African American and other women of color. It is, therefore, not a universal women’s theology and does not speak to the issue of all women.”⁵⁵

“While in the struggle Black Theology is concerned with the liberation of all humanity, with particular attention to Black people, and it is engaged in the struggle against racism, it is often indifferent to black women’s experiences and has been guilty of sexist practices.”⁵⁶ “It has frequently ignored the contributions of Black women who participate in the mutual struggle against racism. In similar fashion, white feminist

⁵¹ Thomas, “Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm,” 488-99.

⁵² Smith, “Womanist Theology: Empowering Black Women Through Christian Education,” 202.

⁵³ Thomas, “Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm,” 488-99.

⁵⁴ Thomas, “Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm,” 488-99.

⁵⁵ Thomas, “Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm,” 488-99.

⁵⁶ Smith, “Womanist Theology: Empowering Black Women Through Christian Education,” 202.

scholars often stand in solidarity in the mutual struggle against feminist and womanist, scholars often stand in solidarity in the mutual struggle against sexism to affirm the “full humanity of women.” Black women have often experienced racism through their involvement with the feminist movement.”⁵⁷

In the area of formation of Womanist Theology, “Womanist theology, since the 1980’s has emerged as a vehicle for African American female clergy and religious scholars to shape their own identity, honor their unique experience as Black women in America, preserve and celebrate their cultural heritage, and highlight the contributions they have made historically to religious disclosure and the wider context.”⁵⁸ “Womanist theology is an emergent voice of African American Christian women in the United States. Employing Alice Walker’s definition of womanism in her text, *In Search of Our Mother’s Garden*, black women in America are calling into question their suppressed role in the African Church, the community, the family, and the larger society. But womanist religious reflection is more than mere deconstruction. It is, more importantly, the empowering assertion of the black woman’s voice.”⁵⁹

In the area of formation for Womanist Theology, “Names associated with the emergence of womanist theology in the U.S.A are Katie Cannon, Emile Towns, Jacqueline Grant, Delores Williams, Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, Kelly Brown Douglas, Renita Weems, Shawn Copeland, Carice Martin, Francis Wood, Karen Barker Fletcher,

⁵⁷ Smith, “Womanist Theology: Empowering Black Women Through Christian Education,” 202.

⁵⁸ Smith, “Womanist Theology: Empowering Black Women Through Christian Education,” 202.

⁵⁹ Thomas, “Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm,” 488-99.

Jamie Phelps, Marcia Riggs, and Cheryl Kirk-Duggan.”⁶⁰ These particular women are from various walks of life and serve in various capacities. In the voices of these women, “We are university, seminary, and divinity professors. We are ordained and lay women in all the Christian denominations. Some of us are full-time pastors; some are both pastor and professor. We are preachers and prayer warriors. We are mothers, partners, lovers, wives, sisters, daughters, aunts, nieces—and we comprise two-thirds of the black church in America. We are the black church. The church would be bankrupt without us and the church would shut down without us. We are from working-class as well as middle-class backgrounds. We are charcoal black to high yellow women. We love our bodies; we touch our bodies; we like to be touched; we claim our created beauty. And we know that what our minds forget, our bodies remember. The body is central to our being. The history of the African American ordeal of pain and pleasure is inscribed in our bodies.”⁶¹

In the area of the Key Purposes of Womanist Theology, the goals of Womanist Theology are, “to interrogate the social construction of black womanhood in relation to the African American community. The normative discourse among African American women creates the space for an energetic claiming of the life stories of African American women and their contribution to the history of the United States and the African diaspora.”⁶² “An additional way of achieving this goal is to engage in a critical conversation with black (male) theology, so that a full theology for the African American

⁶⁰ Thomas, “Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm,” 488-99.

⁶¹ Thomas, “Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm,” 488-99.

⁶² Thomas, “Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm,” 488-99.

community can emerge from that dialogue.”⁶³ “Another goal of womanist theology is to unearth the ethnographic sources within the African American community in order to reconstruct knowledge and overcome subordination. Finally, womanist theology seeks to decolonize the African mind and to affirm our African heritage.”⁶⁴

In short, Womanist theology has come to symbolize the experience of African American women. It embraces the uniqueness and beauty of Black womanhood while challenging negative images and stereotypes about Black women that have been perpetuated by a sexist and racist culture. Moreover, womanist theology strives to empower Black women with the necessary skills and confidence to participate in the ongoing struggle for their own liberation as well as the liberation and transformation of the wider society.”⁶⁵ “Moreover, womanist theology asserts what black women’s unique experiences mean in relation to God and creation and survival in the world. Thus, the tasks of womanist theology are to claim history, to declare authority for ourselves, our men, and our children, to learn from the experience of our forebears, to admit shortcomings, and errors, and to improve our quality of life.”⁶⁶

In the area of location, where does “Shoes of Womanist Theology,” stand today? “Womanist theology is a diamond with several facets, which first illuminated in the work of Cannon (ethics), Grant (theology), Williams (theology), Weems (Bible), and Townes (ethics). It has evolved in some significant ways since its early days, returning to

⁶³ Thomas, “Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm,” 488-99.

⁶⁴ Thomas, “Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm,” 488-99.

⁶⁵ Smith, “Womanist Theology: Empowering Black Women Through Christian Education,” 203.

⁶⁶ Thomas, “Womanist Theology, Epistemology, and a New Anthropological Paradigm,” 488-99.

William's fundamental hermeneutical question about whose voices are missing and giving increasingly broader answers. Yet, it remains committed to its original orientation: a concern for the black church and community, the privileging of black women's experiences, an intersectional perspective that sees oppression as multidimensional, and a blunt interrogation of doctrine and prior theological claims (as evident in the critical scholarship of Karen Baker-Fletcher and M. Shawn Copeland).⁶⁷

"In the recent years, womanist theology has amplified its engagement with black women's cultural sources to include e-platforms, social media, fashion, hip-hop culture, and other forms of pop culture. Attending to the entire imaginative culture that generates communal survival and flourishing for black women, womanists are using new modes of communication."⁶⁸ "Recently, Melanie Jones and Liz Alexander have asserted "millennial womanism" as a way of "doing womanist work in the age of social media, Black Lives Matter, Say Her Name, trap music, mass incarceration, religious pluralism, and a kaleidoscope of gender and sexual identities."⁶⁹

"Womanist theology has moved the theological conversation beyond the demonic navel-gazing of whiteness and masculinity, always aiming for a more inclusive vision. It has grown in increasingly expansive ways, posing new questions even while its original questions continue to reverberate throughout the theological world. Accompanied and compelled by the Spirit, the story of womanist theology is, as Cannon would often say,

⁶⁷ Eboni Marshall Turman, "Black Women's Faith, Black Women's Flourishing," *The Christian Century*, February 28, 2019, <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/critical-essay/black-women-s-faith-black-women-s-flourishing>.

⁶⁸ Turman, "Black Women's Faith, Black Women's Flourishing."

⁶⁹ Turman, "Black Women's Faith, Black Women's Flourishing."

the story of black women “doing the work our souls must have.” It confirms today what has asserted from the moment Cannon stood before that white audience at the AAR black women, “will make a way out of no way—a way of moral wisdom, truth telling, willful virtue, “furious dancing,” and deep faith.”⁷⁰

Conclusion

In “Shoes of Theology,” we examined four different “Shoes of Theology!” These four shoes were grouped into two categories and the reasoning behind that was because, when it comes to the area of preaching, which is the thematic theme of the project, preaching is a very male dominated field. Just as one would enter a shoe store to shop for shoes, normally, the men shoes and the women shoes are in different sections of the store. Furthermore, I believe that it is correct to assume that men have one way of shopping for shoes, while women have another way to shop for shoes. Just as this distinction is clear in the area of shoes, I believe that it also the case when it comes to preaching! Most people view a male preacher one way, and they view a female preacher another way! I also believe that in response to how society makes a huge difference in the area of gender and preaching the Gospel, this response can have a negative effect on the female preacher! Being a female preacher, I have found out that when it comes to preaching, “men are celebrated, but women are tolerated!” It is my belief that this toleration towards women, can make women feel inadequate and even fearful of fulling fulfilling the call to preach! “Shoes of Theology,” examined four theologies that will serve as the theological foundation for this project.

⁷⁰ Turman, “Black Women’s Faith, Black Women’s Flourishing.”

Within the men's section, the first "Shoe of Theology," that was examined was the "Shoe of Liberation Theology." Liberation Theology deals with the liberating of oppressed people. Liberation theology refers to the belief that Jesus Christ is the great liberator and that Jesus Christ is on the side of the oppressed. This oppression that the movement is centered around, refers to the belief that the oppression comes from outside forces, such social, economic, and political. However, some within the movement felt that the oppression was inward rather than outward! This particular "Shoe of Theology," will serve this project in the area of looking for oppression for the female preacher and rather that oppression is coming from inward forces or if that oppression is coming from outward forces!

The second "Shoe of Theology" that was examined within the men's section was the "Shoe of Black Theology!" Black Theology has roots in Liberation Theology and Black Theology focuses on being black and being Christian. Black Theology refers to the liberation of black people and that God has created the individual to reach their full potential! Black theology looks at the God and the person of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, to liberate all people, but in particular, the Black Christian person, so that they will love themselves, thrive and be all that God has intended for them to be! This particular "Shoe of Theology," we serve the project in the area that the female preacher, whom the context will be of majority, a black context, will examine the liberation that they have or may not have in their walk with God as well as in their walk in the preaching ministry!

The next section that we examined in "Shoes of Theology" was the women's section! The first "Shoe of Theology" within this section was the "Shoes of Feminist

Theology!” Feminist Theology refers to oppression of women, in all areas such as discrimination, sexual, political, and in the area of economics. Feminist Theology focuses on women’s experience and seeks to provide liberation for the woman. This particular, “Shoe of Theology,” will serve the project in the area that the female preacher will look at the different areas where they experience oppression! It is the goal of this project that the women will give voices to those different areas of oppression, such as discrimination in all areas such as race, gender, sexual, age and even economic!

The final “Shoes of Theology” that was examined was the “Shoes of Womanist Theology.” Womanist Theology focuses on the oppression of the Black woman, to include the black clergy woman. The areas of oppression that black women face is social, political, gender, race, economic, class and physical disability. Black theology and Feminist Theology have been said to ignore the oppression of the Black woman. Therefore, this theology is greatly needed to address the struggles of the Black woman! This particular “Shoe of Theology” will serve the project as the Black woman, particularly the Black clergy woman and the struggles and oppressions they face, particularly in the area of preaching!

In conclusion, in the proposed project: “If The Shoe Fits Wear It: Empowering Women Ministers to Walk Comfortably in their call to preach!” The context of clergy women will walk in these four different “Shoes of Theology,” and engage in theological discussion and have a strong theological foundation of which to stand on!

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

When an individual is asked, “who is the person that he or she knows the best, many will usually answer, “Themselves.” It is not uncommon for an individual to claim to know themselves the most. After all, we were born with “ourselves.” We grew up with ourselves and every day of our life, the one individual that we cannot escape is ourselves. Therefore, being that the “self” is no stranger to us, why is it that the “self” can sometimes be difficult to understand, grasp or even accept at times? A quote by Benjamin Franklin, suggests, “There are three things extremely hard: steel, a diamond, and to know oneself.”¹ Therefore, being that the “self” can be difficult to understand, the question is, will we ever really and fully know and understand ourselves?

This Interdisciplinary Foundation, “Knowing Her Self’s,” will address some of the theories that are associated, with the “Self!” Furthermore, this study is focused primarily on women, and is in relation to the Doctor of Ministry Proposed Project: “If The Shoe Fits, Wear it: Empowering Women Ministers to Comfortably in their Call to Preach!” This proposed project will be in reference to women in the preaching ministry and this project will be designed in such a way that a working hypothesis will be put in

¹ David G. Myers, *Social Psychology* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 35.

motion! The Hypothesis states: “If women ministers engage with other women ministers in sharing their struggles and challenges in ministry and receive support and empowerment training, then women ministers will be able to walk more comfortably in their call to preach!

The context for which the proposed project will be centered in, around, and upon is considered to be a “Context Within a Context.” The church context will be the United Missionary Baptist Church, located in Dayton, Ohio. The clergy context will be clergy women from the surrounding area, who are walking in the preaching ministry! The church context has a unique and identifying aspect, in that there are three ordained clergy women that serve in this context. This unique identifying marker is unique to the tradition of the Baptist Church, in that not all Baptist Churches are open in welcoming, women in ministry! Therefore, the proposed project will be designed in such a way, that at the conclusion of the proposed project, what will follow will be the formation of a support group ministry for women in ministry!

The content of, “Knowing Her Self’s,” will speak to the field of psychology, specifically in the area of: Social Psychology, Humanistic Psychology and Health Psychology! More importantly, due to the fact that ‘Knowing Her Self’s,’ is geared towards women, the field of Feminine Psychology will be explored as well! Also, “Knowing “Her Self’s,” will explore three different theories in the area of “self” within the fields. Those theories are Self-Concept Theory, Self-Identity Theory and Self-Efficacy Theory.

The sequence of this “Theoretical Task,” will proceed in this way. This document will be sectioned into three main sections. Those sections are: “The Discussion, The

Disciplines and The Development. In the section of “The Discussion, there will be a discussion of “Feminine Psychology, as well as the area of “Theoretical Foundations in Ministry Practice,” as it relates to the targeted theme at hand, for which will be entitled: “Clergy Conflict- The Female Preacher!” In the section entitled: “The Disciplines,” the “self” theories will be presented! First, the term “Self,” will be presented. Secondly, Carl Rogers, “Self-Concept” Theory will be presented. The three stages of “Self-Concept Theory,” are:” Self-Image, Self-esteem, and the Ideal Self! Thirdly, the “Self-Identity Theory,” will be presented. The four stages of “Self-Identity Theory,” are: Assimilation, Questioning or Awareness, Rejection and Disengagement, and Integration and Reengagement. The final theory that will be presented will be Albert Bandura’s “Self-Efficacy Theory.” The four stages of “Self-Efficacy Theory,” are: Mastery Experience, Vicarious Experiences, Verbal Persuasion and Psychological and Emotional States. Lastly, the section entitled: “The Development,” will include a summary and a conclusion, as well as the development of a possible project.

Feminine Psychology

In the area of women knowing themselves, it is imperative that a discussion of “Feminine Psychology” is explained. “Feminine Psychology is an area of psychology that focuses on the political, economic, and social issues that pervasively confront Women (Horney, 1967).”² Feminine Psychology was founded by Karen Horney, who asserted that male realities cannot describe female psychology or define women’s gender by virtue of the lack of experience of voices from girls and women. Therefore, theorists

² Virgil Zeigler-Hill and Todd K. Shackelford, “Psychology of Personality and Individual Differences,” http://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-3-31928099-8_663-1.

contend that this area of psychology is necessary and that some women voices, and experiences are crucial to understand this psychology.”³

The foundation that Feminine Psychology stands upon is the disagreement between Karen Horney’s theory of “Womb Envy,” verses Sigmund Freud’s theory, “Penis Envy.” According to Freud, “Penis Envy Theory suggests that during the phallic stage (around ages 3 to 6 years) young girls’ distance themselves from their mothers and instead devote their affection to their fathers.”⁴ Karen Horney’s Theory, “Womb Envy,” disagrees and suggest that the envy experienced by some males for the reproductive ability of females, thought of as an unconscious drive, which causes them to belittle women.”⁵

The theories of “Womb Envy,” and “Penis Envy,” are in references of the differences between men and women and how society views the difference between the two genders. Within society, one can see these differences even in the area of vocation. In a report by Felicia Pratto and her colleagues, “In general, men gravitate disproportionately to jobs that enhance inequalities (Prosecuting attorney, corporate advertising); women gravitate to jobs that reduce inequalities (public defender, advertising work for a charity. Studies of 640,00 people’s job preferences reveal that men more than women value earnings, promotion, challenge, and power; women more than men value good hours, personal relationships, and opportunities to help others. And worldwide, women’s vocational interests, compared with men’s, usually relate more to

³ Zeigler-Hill and Shackelford, “Psychology of Personality and Individual Differences.”

⁴ Kendra Cher, “Contributions of Karen Horney To Psychology,” <https://www.verywellmind.com/how-sigmund-freud-viewed-women-2795859>.

⁵ N. Pam MS, “Womb Envy,” Psychology Dictionary. <https://psychologydictionary.org/womb-envy/>.

people and less to things.”⁶ The vocational differences between men and women, women usually have to fight for positions that men do not have to fight for, thus creating a sense of inferiority between the sexes. “The woman’s sense of inferiority is not constitutional but acquired. In a patriarchal society, the attitude of male dominances and successfully convinces women of their supposed inadequacies. It socializes them into a restricted set of role expectations of submissive and loving wife and mother.”⁷ In considering, the theories of “Womb Envy,” and “Penis Envy,” as well as the vocational differences between men and women, these vocational differences can also be seen with the church community. The discussion will continue with: “Clergy Conflict-The Female Preacher!”

Clergy Conflict-The Female Preacher!

One of the main discussions as well as disagreements in certain church contexts, is the role of the clergy context in relation to men and women! Within the church, there seems to be a distinction between the “ministry of the place,” versus the “ministry of the pulpit!” Just as society has assumed certain roles for men and certain roles for women, the church has also assumed certain roles for men and certain roles for women! In the area of the “ministry of the place” referring to the ministries within the church, women normally assume the roles of Sunday School Teachers, Nursey Workers and Culinary Workers, whereas men, usually assume the roles in the area of the “Ministry of the pulpit,” such as preaching and pastoring!

⁶ David G. Myers, *Social Psychology* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 35.

⁷ Barbara Engler, *Personality Theories* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning), 117.

Over the years, these roles have changed within some denominations, “The category of “women preachers” has drastically risen in recent days...In 2017, Barna Research Group pointed out that there was a rise in the number of women pastors. According to their study, “One of every 11 Protestant pastors is a woman---triple as many as 25 years ago.” In a new statistical analysis, “State of Clergywomen in the U.S.: A Statistical Update,” the number indicates that within “most Mainline denominations, the percentage of clergywomen has doubled or tripled since 1994.”⁸ “It seems that while evangelical churches are still slow to respond to this trend, there is an increase, nonetheless. However, if you remove the office of pastor from the statistical analysis within evangelicalism---you would discover that many women are regularly preaching in conferences and church settings.”⁹

In the book, *A Church of Her Own: What Happens When a Woman Takes the Pulpit*, “A 2003 Episcopal survey revealed that congregations members who see an ordained woman in the pulpit and at the altar are significantly more likely to approve of women in all church leadership positions than those who see only men.”¹⁰ Although the church has made great strides in being open to women in ministry, women in ministry have also made great strides in the area of ministry. There are still those areas of conflict that women in ministry face that are unique to women, and it is for that reason that it is important that a sense of knowing oneself, knowing her “self’s,” is sought amongst women in ministry. Sarah Sentilles states, “Discovering something new about yourself is

⁸ Josh Buice, “The Rise in Women Preachers and What You Should Know,” <https://www.deliveredbygrace.com/the-rise-in-women-preachers-and-what-you-should-know/>.

⁹ Buice, “The Rise in Women Preachers and What You Should Know.”

¹⁰ Sarah Sentilles, *A Church of Her Own: What Happens When a Woman Takes the Pulpit* (Boston, MA: and New York, NY: Mariner Books/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008, 2009), 36.

exhilarating, living into that discovery can be terrifying. But as jarring as it can be to realize that you are not the person you want to be, it is nothing compared to the sanctions that follow when you are not the person others think you should be, when you defy cultural roles and expectations.”¹¹ This area of “discovery” will lead to the area of “The Disciplines,” where the “Self” theories will be discussed. However, before one can discuss “Self-Theories,” one must first discuss “Self!”

Self

“In psychology, the notion of the self refers to a person’s experience as a single, unitary, autonomous being that is separate from others, experienced with continuity through time and place. The experience of the self includes consciousness of one’s physicality as well as one’s inner character and emotional life.”¹² “People experience their selves in two senses. First is as an active agent who acts on the world as well as being influenced by that world. This type of self is usually referred to as “I.” and focus on how people experience themselves as doers. The second is an object of reflection and evaluation. In this type of self, people turn their attention to their physical and psychological attributes to contemplate the constellation of skills, traits, attitudes, opinions, and feelings that they have. This type is referred to as the “me.” And focuses on how people observe themselves from the outside looking in, much like people monitor and contemplate the competence and character of other people.”¹³

¹¹ Sarah Sentilles, *A Church of Her Own*, 36.

¹² “Psychology Research and References,” Self -Definition, <https://psychology.iresearchnret.com/social-psychology/self/>.

¹³ Psychology Research and References,” Self -Definition.

In the area of self, there are four aspects of self: The Physical Aspect, The Mental Aspect, The Emotional Aspect, and The Spiritual Aspect. The Physical Aspect is in reference to our physical bodies and this aspect includes our ability to survive and live in the material world. This aspect also deals with our five senses and how we relate to the world. This aspect also includes how we take care of our body and also how we enjoy our bodies.¹⁴ Our mental aspect refers to our intellect, our ability to think and reason. This aspect also includes our thoughts, attitudes, feelings, and our beliefs. Our Emotional Aspects refers to how we relate to and feel about one another and our world. This is the part of self that seeks meaning contact with one another. Our Spiritual Aspect is our inner essence and the part of ourselves that is beyond this world. This is the part of self that seeks for a deeper meaning and purpose in the world.¹⁵ The discussion of self, leads to the “Disciplines, where the self-theories will be discussed.

The Disciplines: The Self-Concept Theory

The Self-Concept Theory falls under the category of “Humanistic Psychology.” This area of psychology focuses on “They study of human beings and how human beings are active participants in their own lives.”¹⁶ The “Self-Concept Theory” is a personality theory that can be defined as, “the organized, consisted set of perceptions and beliefs about oneself.” “There are three components of “The Self-Concept Theory,” self-image,

¹⁴ “Balancing Mind, Body & Soul-Health/Beauty & Nutrition,” The Four Aspects of Self, <https://balancingmindbodysoul.co.uk/spiritual/development/the-four-aspects-of-self>.

¹⁵ Balancing Mind, Body & Soul-Health/Beauty & Nutrition.”

¹⁶ Lisa Cohen, *The Handy Psychology Answer Book* (Canton, MI: Visible Ink Press, 2016), 50.

self-esteem and the ideal self.¹⁷ “Self-Images is how we see ourselves, which is important to good psychological health. Self-image includes the influence our body image on inner personality. Self-esteem (or self-worth) comprises what we think about ourselves, and the Ideal Self is the person we would like to be. It consists of our goals and ambitions in life, and is dynamic —i. e, forever changing. The Ideal self in childhood is not the ideal self in our teens or late twenties.”¹⁸ The next theory to be described is “The Self-Identity Theory.” The four stages of “Self-Identity Theory,” are: Assimilation, Questioning or Awareness, rejection and Disengagement and Integration and Reengagement.

The Disciplines: The Self-Identity Theory!

The “Self-Identity Theory,” comes under the heading of “Social Psychology.” Social Psychology is, “the study of manner in which the personality, abilities, motivation, and behavior of the individual influence and are influenced by social groups.”¹⁹ The four stages of “Self-Identity Theory,” are Assimilation, Questioning and Awareness, Rejection and Disengagement and Integration and Reengagement. Assimilation refers to “being educated or indoctrinated to believe that the standard of excellence and all good is synonymous with dominate culture. Questioning and Awareness, is initiated by crisis (personal, political or social), or comment that causes a person to question beliefs about

¹⁷ Saul McLeod, “Simply Psychology,” <https://www.simplypsycholgy.org-carl-rogers.pdf>.

¹⁸ McLeod, “Simply Psychology.”

¹⁹ *Merriam Webster*, “Social Psychology,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20psychology>.

themselves, comparing what they have been taught, with what they actually experience.”²⁰

“Rejection and Disengagement is the withdrawal from the dominant culture and immersion into one’s own ethnic group culture. Integration and Reengagement is the stage, when people have learned from and move back and forth among the previous stages. People in this stage has gone through personal growth and their sense of self is more positive and their connection and attachment to the world is more secure. They have discovered that their identity can be flexible, and fluid and they have learned to embrace the many paradoxes of everyday life.”²¹ The next theory to be described is “The Self-Efficacy Theory.”

The Disciplines: “The Self-Efficacy Theory

The “Self-Efficacy Theory” comes under the heading of “Health Psychology.” Health Psychology is the, “study of psychological roots of health and illness.”²² “Health psychologists study how people respond to illness symptoms and how emotions and explanations influence [their] health.”²³ Self-Efficacy theory is the “optimistic self-belief in one’s competence or chances of successfully accomplishing a task and producing a

²⁰ Unitarian Universalist, “Handout 1: Four Stages of Identity Formation,” <https://uua.org/re/tapestry/adukts/btwwdaya/workshop3/209369.shtml>.

²¹ Unitarian Universalist, “Handout 1: Four Stages of Identity Formation.”

²² David G. Myers, *Social Psychology* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 540.

²³ Myers, *Social Psychology*, 540.

favorable outcome.”²⁴ The four stages of “Self-Efficacy Theory” are Mastery Experience, Vicarious Experience, Verbal Persuasion, and Psychological and Emotional States.

Mastery Experience is when individuals set goals and they persist through challenges on the road to goal achievement, and they enjoy the satisfying results.²⁵

“Vicarious Experience can build self-efficacy by witnessing demonstrations of competence by people who are similar to them. Social Persuasion occurs when a person is told that they will succeed, and they are more likely to achieve success. Psychological and Emotional states is the idea that one’s emotions, mood and physical states influence how we judge our self-efficacy.”²⁶ “According to Bandura (2008), it is harder to feel assured of our ability to succeed when we feel weariness and a low mood.”²⁷ The conclusion of describing “The Disciplines,” leads to “The Development.”

The Development: “Summary, Development of Proposed Project and Conclusion

In “Knowing Her “Self’s,” the assumption has been made that it is important to know oneself. In a more narrowed focus, the focus is on women and particularly, women in ministry. We began with “The Discussion of Feminine Psychology, and Clergy Conflict: The Woman Preacher. Feminine Psychology is the psychology that deals with women and women’s issues. In the area of Clergy Conflict: “The Woman Preacher,” the issues of the rise in clergy women within the church was discussed as well as some of the

²⁴ Miriam Akhtar, “What is Self-Efficacy? Bandura’s 4 Sources of Efficacy Beliefs,” <https://positivepsychology.org.uk/self-efficacy-definition-bandura-meaning>.

²⁵ Positive Psychology, “Albert Bandura Self-Efficacy For Agentic Positive Psychology,” <https://www.positivepsychology.com/bandura-self-efficacy>.

²⁶ Positive Psychology, “Albert Bandura Self-Efficacy For Agentic Positive Psychology.”

²⁷ Positive Psychology, “Albert Bandura Self-Efficacy For Agentic Positive Psychology.”

unique ways in which women in ministry, are faced with struggles and challenges in ministry.

In the Discipline Section, a defining and description of self was given. From there, the three “Self-Theories” was discussed. The first theory that was discussed was “The Self-Concept Theory,” that consisted of three stages: self-image, self-esteem, and the ideal self! The second theory that was discussed was the “Self-Identity Theory,” that consisted of four stages: Assimilation, Questioning and Awareness, Rejection and Disengagement, and Integration and Reengagement. The third theory to be discussed was “The Efficacy Theory,” which consists of four stages: Mastery Experience, Vicarious Experience, Verbal Persuasion and Psychological and Emotional States.” These particular theories were discussed and is in relation to the proposed project: “If the Shoe Fits, Wear it! Empowering Women Ministers to walk Comfortably in their Call To Preach.” In order for Women in ministry to walk comfortable in their call to preach, they must have a positive “self-Image” about themselves. Women ministers must also have a strong sense of self-identity, they must know who they are in their call to preach. Lastly, women in ministry must have a strong sense of “Self-efficacy” and they must believe that they can succeed in ministry.

It is the hope of the researcher that this project will empower women in ministry and that at the conclusion of the project, the participants will be empowered, as well as develop deep and meaningful relationship, among other women in ministry

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

The Struggles

The introduction for this project will present four struggles: the Struggle in the Standards, the Struggle in the Sanctuary, the Struggle in the Sisters, and finally, the Struggle with Self!

The Struggle in the Standards

The call to ministry, particularly the preaching ministry, has been known to be difficult for most women. The call to preach can look much different for women than it can for men.

We can trace the path of some of our most beloved biblical characters through their call to ministry: Moses, Gideon, even Jeremiah, were called by God, pushed towards that call despite their own fears, and were reassured that God would be with them as they went forth in obedience. It's not nearly as common to hear of a 'call narrative' for women in the bible, however. The biblical stories of women entering ministry are present, but often overlooked.¹

¹ Alisha L. Gordon, *Women in Ministry: When the Call Is Enough*, HuffPost, http://www.huffpost.com/entry/women-in-ministry-when-th_b_8634548.

Today, we still find that many women who are called into ministry are met with a silencing of their stories, untold moments of how they moved from obscurity to the pulpit. Being a woman in ministry comes with a unique set of challenges that plague the longevity and acceptance of a woman into a male-dominated vocation. Women who enter ministry often juggle motherhood, marriage, other careers and hobbies, and face the ever-growing demand to be all things to all people.²

In her book *Leading Women*, Carol E. Becker addresses the leadership struggle between men and women and she explains that women are entering the church in significant numbers in the area of ordained as well as lay ministry, and although in some ways, these women are being welcomed by men and by the congregation, these women are still struggling.³ Becker states, “They face a glass ceiling just as impermeable as in any corporation. In some denominations, women have joined the ranks of church leaders in large numbers and are now leaving in numbers just as large.”⁴

In her article, “Women in Ministry: When the Call Is Enough,” Alisha Gordon states,

[W]omen who find their way into ministry, whether that’s Sunday-to-Sunday pulpit preaching or singing on the praise team, in religious education, church administration, or the like, find it hard to stay in ministry because of a lack of communal support. As a result, many women find themselves burned out because the world around us failed to affirm and support God’s call on our life.⁵

It is no secret that many women have sat down on their call to preach, due to the stress, strain, and the struggle. Bishop Vashti McKenzie states it this way,

[T]he struggle continues for leaders who happen to be women. They must struggle through a sea of stereotypes to rise to the top of their professions. They

² Gordon, *Women in Ministry*.

³ Carole E. Becker, *Leading Women: How Church Women Can Avoid Leadership Traps and Negotiate The Gender Maze* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 25.

⁴ Becker, *Leading Women*, 25-26.

⁵ Gordon, *Women in Ministry*.

must work under glass ceilings, stained, colored or clear, watching what goes on at the top but never reaching the pinnacle themselves.⁶

Whereas it is hard for women to reach this pinnacle in the area of leadership, it becomes much harder for women to reach this “pinnacle in preaching.” In the call to preach, men are often patted on the back for preaching, while women are put down and pushed to the side. I concur with many who say: “Men are celebrated, and women are tolerated.” In the words of Bishop Vashti McKenzie, “women were ordained into ministry and just tolerated.”⁷ Although, women ministers have made great strides in ministry as well as in different denominations since the 1800’s, there is still a great need for the empowerment of women in ministry — the preaching ministry in particular!

The Struggle in the Sanctuary

Women performing ministry within the church is not the problem. Women are involved in teaching ministry, evangelism ministry, children’s ministry, administrative ministry, and the usual culinary ministry. So, the problem is not the “ministry” that takes place in the “pew,” but the problem is the “ministry,” that takes place in the “pulpit!” The pulpit and the preaching of the Word of God have become more about “gender” than it is about the “gospel.” For men, the pulpit has a “welcome” sign, but for women, the pulpit has a “warning” sign. And in particular, the warning sign says, “Do Not Enter!” Once again, Carole Becker states, “the fact is women in leadership get mixed messages from

⁶ Vashti M. McKenzie, *Strength in the Struggle: Leadership Development For Women* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2001), 1.

⁷ Vashti M. McKenzie, *Not Without A Struggle: Leadership Development For African American Women In Ministry* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1996), 35.

the church. On one hand they are welcomed, on the other hand, they are not.”⁸ Becker further explains, on one hand women in leadership are being welcomed in the church to meet the quotas to make sure that women in leadership are visibly present.⁹

On the other hand, they are made unwelcomed, either explicitly or implicitly, by habits of language that exclude them, by an entrenched male hierarchy in the clergy ranks, by male theological dogma and thinking, and by enduring fear of their sexuality that is the legacy of a patriarchal Christianity.¹⁰

“What we are experiencing,” says one clergywoman, “is the creaking of an ancient heavy door, slowly opening, with some pulling it open, and others pushing it closed.”¹¹ This struggle for women in ministry within the sanctuary is a very real and present struggle.

The Struggle in the Sisters

In consideration of this context, “sisters” are in reference to women in ministry. As women in ministry, and particularly the preaching ministry, this struggle that women face can and will have a negative impact on oneself and thus, “clergywomen often serve in isolation. With one or only a few other women in ministry in the same locale, there is a need for female network or support group to share information and exchange ideas.”¹² The fifth commandment of the “Ten Womanist Commandments For Clergy” states,

⁸ Becker, *Leading Women*, 61.

⁹ Becker, *Leading Women*, 61.

¹⁰ Becker, *Leading Women*, 61-62.

¹¹ Becker, *Leading Women*, 62.

¹² McKenzie, *Not Without A Struggle*, 67.

“Thou shall Be A Sister To Your Sister In The Ministry!”¹³ The commandment states, “network, caucus, and pool your collective strength. There is still strength in unity. The hand is stronger than the finger. Two minds can be better than one, and much more can be done by some than one.”¹⁴

Therefore, it has been stated that women should

[L]ook for opportunities to mentor other women. Share with women who have walked the rough road of ministry before you and are willing to share their wisdom and not just the gory details. Learn from the stories of other women. Learn to tell yours. Try to build up and not tear down your sister in the ministry. There is enough to struggle with already without struggling with another sister.¹⁵

The Struggle in Self

Women in ministry have many struggles that have just been presented, but perhaps the biggest struggle for women in ministry is the “struggle with one’s own self.” It has been stated that many denominations and churches have a vast majority of women that are serving in ministry. For a majority of these women, they may experience freedom in their place of worship, but still lack the experience of freedom in the position of their “person.” Just because you are free in “the” house does not mean that you are free in “your” house. Author Barbara Brown Taylor, in her book, *The Preaching Life*, identifies the voices that comes at preachers from the outside as well as from the inside. She states, “first there are all the voices that come to us from outside ourselves, describing us as successes or failures based on our looks, our performances, our incomes. Then there are the voices that come to us from within ourselves, reminding us of what we will never be,

¹³ McKenzie, *Not Without A Struggle*, 113.

¹⁴ McKenzie, *Not Without A Struggle*, 113.

¹⁵ McKenzie, *Not Without A Struggle*, 113.

never do, never have.”¹⁶ Not only are women in ministry battling outward struggles, but they are battling inward struggles as well. Being that these struggles have been identified and they are present in the context of women in ministry, the question put forth is what strategic plan or strategy can be sought, that can possibly address this problem?

The Strategy

The design of this document has been a specified strategy that has been created to bring about all the working pieces to formulate this project. This specified strategy consists of: The Synthesis of Synergy, The Formation of Foundations, The Intention of Integration, The Presenting of Project, the Helm of Hypothesis, and The Criterion of Context.

The Synthesis of Synergy

The Synergy entitled “Synergy Sisters” consisted of the Spiritual Autobiography entitled “The Sermons of Life!” and the Contextual Analysis is entitled “Frames of Faith!” Together, with my ministry journey as well as my context, these two sections provide “synergy” and help to aid in supporting this project.

The Formation of Foundations

The four foundational sections of this document laid a working foundation for a proposed project. The biblical foundation presented community and unity among women for a common cause, which resulted in a significant change. The historical foundation

¹⁶ Barbara Brown Taylor, *The Preaching Life* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1993), 57.

presented a fight for freedom for one woman, which in turn led to the freedom of countless other individuals — in particular, the freedom of women. The theological foundation presented four different theologies in the area of men and women and their different views on theology and represented how men and women can come together for the greater goal. The interdisciplinary foundation presented building up the woman and her different “self’s.” This building of self’s is designed to bring about empowerment for women in this project.

The Intention of Integration

The intended goal for all of these working components of this document is that all individual parts will come together and provide structure, strength, and lay a strong foundation the proposed project.

The Presenting of Project

Therefore, with the foundation that has been laid, I propose to present a project that will seek to empower women ministers in the call to preach. This project: “If The Shoe Fits, Wear It: Empowering Women Ministers To Walk Comfortably In their Call To Preach,” will be conducted through four empowerment training sessions with the conclusion of a “closing out” sermonette that is designed to encourage and empower women ministers.

The Helm of Hypothesis

The hypothesis states, “If women ministers attend empowerment sessions on preaching, then they will be empowered to walk more comfortably in their call to preach.” The driving force that steers this hypothesis derives from my passion for preaching the Word of God and my passion for empowering other women in ministry.

The Criterion of Context

The context for this project is the United Missionary Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio. This context serves as a strong pillar for women in ministry. Presently, this context has one senior male pastor and three ordained clergy females that include me. As clergy females, we experience the freedom within this context to actively participate in pulpit preaching, and my pastor is constantly and continuously supporting the clergy women within this context. Previously stated in this document, it was explained how this context would serve as a “Frame Within a Frame” for women in ministry in that this project would not only seek to empower the clergy women within this context, but this project will also serve as empowerment of clergy women from the surrounding communities. Within the surrounding community, there are presently no ministries or organizations that seek to empower clergy women. Being that this context is very unique and rare in that it aids women in ministry, it is only befitting that this context serves as a “catalyst” in the empowerment of clergywomen.

This context will not only serve as a “Frame Within A Frame” for this project, but this context will also serve as a “Canal” for clergy women. In his book *The Adept Church*, F. Douglas Powe, Jr. presents Howard Thurman’s descriptive characteristics of

congregations. Howard Thurman explains how a church is one of three things: a swamp, reservoir, or canal. In the description of being a canal, Thurman writes, “the function of a canal is to channel water” — it helps water flow or move from place to place.”¹⁷

Thurman goes on to “describe a canal as a connector. It is a body of water linked to things outside of itself.”¹⁸ This context will serve as a “canal for clergywomen” in that it will seek to empower clergywomen within the context as well as outside of the context.

The Setting

The setting will include the methodology and the implementation of the project. Methodology will include the “Process of Preparation” that was put in place for the project and the implementation will include the actual “Presentation of Project” where details of the project will be given.

Methodology

This project was conducted through a qualitative research design method. “Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.”¹⁹ One of the characteristics of qualitative research is “participants’ meaning.” Participants’ meaning refers to “the researcher keeping the focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the

¹⁷ F. Douglas Powe, Jr., *The Adept Church: Navigating Between a Rock and a Hard Place* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2020), 6.

¹⁸ Powe, *The Adept Church*, 6.

¹⁹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc, 2014), 4.

problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research or that writers express in the literature.”²⁰ This qualitative approach was chosen to measure the effectiveness of the project with the sense of empowerment with the participants.

Participants

The participants included a total of fourteen women who were personally selected by me. Originally, fifteen women participated in the project. However, due to a personal conflict, one participant asked to be excluded from the project. The participants included eleven clergywomen and three lay women. The clergywomen consisted of eight licensed/ordained clergywomen, two co-pastors and one senior pastor. The three lay women consisted of women who are leaders within their context where two of these ladies have either prepared a sermon or delivered a sermon as a lay leader. The selection of the three lay women is due to fact that two of these women are seeking God in area of being called to preach and the other lay woman works in a context geared towards empowerment of young girls and women. Therefore, the data collected from these lay women will be of vital importance that will provide a viewpoint from a lay perspective. The age range of the participants range from late thirties to early seventies. The area of education ranges from undergraduate level to graduate level. Participants were approached by me through in-person contact or by a phone conversation. Once a verbal agreement was established, participants were emailed an official letter inviting them to participate in project (See Appendix A). Included with the invitation letter was also the

²⁰ Creswell, *Research Design*, 186.

informed consent form that needed to be completed by the participant and sent back to me (See Appendix C).

Platform for Project

The original vision of this project was envisioned pre-pandemic and therefore the original intent and design for this project was to be conducted in-person. The severity of this pandemic led to fifteen months of pursuing this Doctor of Ministry Degree virtually with no in-person contact, and by the time the project was set to start, vaccinations were taking place and some of the strict guidelines were being lifted. The thought of possibly having an in-person project began to surface. However, through the advice of my pastor, a virtual project would be required as to ensure everyone's safety. Therefore, preparations were put in place for Zoom to serve as the platform for the project.

Pre/Post Surveys

After a written agreement was established, the participants were provided with a pre-survey that consisted of fifteen questions (See Appendix D). These fifteen questions can thus be furthered categorized into four different sections. These categories are context, calling, confidence, and community. Questions 1 and 2 speak to the context of the participant and ask the participant, "Are you involved in a church, and if so, do you serve as clergy or lay person?" Questions 3 to 5 speak to the calling of the participant and addresses such questions as, "Do you sense a call to preach the Word of God, are you currently walking in the call to preach, and how long have you been walking in the call to preach?" Questions 6 to 12 speak to the confidence of the participant and ask questions

such as, “Do you feel confident in walking in the call to preach?” The participant is asked to give a number on a scale from 1-10 in regard to this confidence level. These same questions are also asked in reference to sermon preparation and sermon delivery.

Question 11 addresses the question of whether or not the participant listens to recordings of their sermon. Question 12 addresses how often the participant preaches. Questions 13 and 14 address community and ask the questions, “Do you value the support of other women in ministry as well as value the support of men in ministry?” The design of these fifteen questions assisted in the research in the measurement of the data presented in this project.

The post-survey also consists of fifteen questions that include different questions but can also be categorized into these same four categories as the pre-survey (See Appendix E). Questions 1 to 7 address the context of the project and address the helpfulness of each foundational perspective that was presented in the project. Questions 8 and 9 address the call of the participant and whether or not the project had an effect on the participants’ call to preach. Questions 10 to 14 address the confidence of the participant and ask the question of the effectiveness of the project on the confidence level of the participant in walking in the call to preach. Questions 13 and 14 speak specifically to the sense of empowerment of the project. Question 15 addresses the community of the project and addresses the question of whether or not the participant is interested in continuing this conversation and participating in a platform designed to empower women in ministry. The opportunity for additional comments from the participants was also provided at the conclusion of the post-survey.

Several other methodologies were included in the project to include group discussions where participants were provided with opportunities to engage with one another, as well as engage me as the presenter. Personal journal entries were kept by participants and participants were given the liberty to share their thoughts or journal articles if they desired. A male guest speaker was invited in and given the task to provide a “male’s” perspective in the empowerment of women in ministry. Participants were able to engage the guest speaker with questions and comments. A sermonette of empowerment was also presented at the close of the project where participants were able to receive the preach Word from me, a woman in ministry. Finally, a post-interview was conducted with one of the participants that allowed me as a researcher to hear reflections from a participant after the project had ended. These several methodologies were very instrumental in providing a measurement for the data analysis.

Project placement

Being that this project focused on the empowerment of women in the preaching ministry, it was my desire to conduct the project during the month of March, which is Women’s History Month. Women’s History Month focuses on the celebrating of women and their many contributions to society and even the world. What better month than to present a project that empowers women than during a month that honors women? Due to delays set forth because of Covid, as well as other factors such as obtaining IRB approval, the project deviated from the proposed project calendar set forth during the Candidacy Review process, and the project took place during the month of June. In viewing this change from March to June in hindsight, this change served as a benefit for

the project in that during the month of March, there are usually many events going on for Women History Month, which in turn could have interfered with the participation of the participants.

Implementation

The project, “If The Shoe Fits, Wear It: Empowering Women Ministers To Comfortably Walk In Their Call To Preach,” was presented in the forum of four empowerment sessions that were designed to empower women ministers to walk with confidence in their call to preach. The platform that positioned the project was through the use of Zoom technology. All participants were provided the Zoom link and login information prior to the start of the project. The project was held for all four Thursdays in the month of June with the dates being June 3rd, June 10th, June 17th, and June 24th. The time frame for the project was from 6:30 pm-8:00 pm. An overview session was conducted a week prior to the project on Thursday May 27th from 6:30-7:30pm. There was a total of five sessions that took place within this project. A PowerPoint Presentation was provided for each session and all PowerPoint Presentations were made available and emailed to each participant after each session. An attendance record was kept for each session. A record was kept for all required tasks pertaining to the project. All pre-work was required to be completed before attending the overview session. The pre-work included reading the invitation letter, completing and returning the informed consent form, and completing the pre-survey. All fourteen participants completed all pre-work.

Overview Session

The overview session was conducted a week prior to the project and this overview session was designed to introduce the project to the participants, introduce the participants to one another, and finally introduce myself as the researcher to the participants. Eleven of the fourteen participants were present for the overview session. I provided alternate dates and times for the remaining three participants to attend the overview session prior to the start of the project. The overview session provided description as well as details for the project (See Appendix F). The overview session began at 6:30 pm with greetings followed by prayer. Next was the meet-and-greet of participants where each participant introduced themselves stating their name and their context. After the meet-and-greet of participants, the project title was presented and explained. Also, the signature photo for the project was presented and explained

After the title of the project was presented and explained, I gave a presentation of a brief introduction of myself, my context and current phase within the Doctor of Ministry program. After this presentation, the project dates and times were presented and discussed. After the project dates and times were given, next the project pre-work was presented and discussed. This was followed by the invitation and explanation of a time of fasting and prayer for the project. Participants were encouraged to join me in a time of fasting and prayer during the implementation of the project. This invitation was strictly voluntarily and participants were free to set their individual times of fasting and prayer, during the project.

Next, the project session outline was presented and explained. Each session presented followed this project session outline below.

1. The Theme: Each session would be presented with an overall theme.
2. The Title: Each session would consist of two titles that would be the two topics of discussion.
3. The Task: The task presented the specific area of focus that the session would address.
4. The Text: The text consisted of the specific teaching materials, scriptures and resources that would be used within the presentation.
5. The Talk: The talk consisted of a time of open discussion among the participants and the researcher.
6. The Take-Away: The take-away consisted of the overall goal that the specific session set out to accomplish.

After the project session outline was presented, the concept of “heel homework” was present. “Heel homework” consisted of a reflection question in relation to the particular session presented and each participant was encouraged to complete their “heel homework” and journal their answers, thoughts, reflections, and questions. This personal journaling was not required to be turned in, but rather to be used for the participants’ own personal use. However, if participants chose to share their reflections on their heel homework, they were more than welcomed to do so. One participant chose to share her thoughts and reflections of one of her assignments and provided me with a copy of her completed “Heel Homework” assignment. I was very appreciative of this providing of homework and felt that it greatly assisted me in the measuring of the data.

Following the presentation of the “Heel Homework,” each module was presented with a brief overview. Week One-Module One presented the “Biblical Perspective,” where biblical passages were presented and discussed in relation to women and their call to preach. Week Two-Module Two presented the “Historical Foundation,” where historical female preachers were presented and discussed in relation to women and their call to preach. Week Three-Module Three presented the “Theoretical Perspective” where different self-theories were presented and discussed in relation to women walking in their call to preach. Also, within this module, a guest speaker made an appearance and

provided the “male perspective” in empowering women in their call to preach. Week Four-Module Four presented the “Practical Perspective,” where practical tools for women in ministry were presented and discussed. Also within this module were the conclusion and the closing sermonette.

Following the presentations of the four modules, the project post-work was presented and discussed. The project post-work consisted of the post-surveys that were emailed to the participants at the conclusion of the project. Following the presenting of post-work, the purpose of the project was presented and the desired goal of the project was that the project will take on hands and feet and become a useful resource for women in ministry. Also, the desired future goals and possible birthing from the project was presented and discussed. The future goals and birthing from the project would be the development of an empowerment ministry that will serve as a resource for women in ministry. The C.R.O.W.N. Connection (Clergy Resource of Women Network) will seek to empower clergy woman to walk in their call to preach. Also, the future goal and birthing from the project is that this dissertation will become a published book entitled: “Walking in Glass Slippers: Empowering Women in the Preaching Ministry.” The overview session was ended with prayer and the excitement and anticipation for the start of the project the following week was set in place.

Module One - “Biblical Perspective”

Module one took place on Thursday, June 3, 2021, at 6:30 pm. The session opened up with greetings and was followed by prayer. I was the presenter for this session. The area of focus for this session was from the “Biblical Perspective.” (See Appendix G).

The theme for this module was “The Call.” The task for this session was “to examine biblical texts that focused on acknowledging, answering, accepting and appreciating the call to preach.” Part one of the session was titled: “Shoes & Sacred Ground!” The biblical text in Exodus 3:1-12 was examined. This biblical account of the call of Moses by God provided the biblical foundation of this module. The goal set forth for this module was to present the importance of having a strong foundation for women in ministry to stand upon in reference to their call to preach. Barbara Taylor explains the role as being a preacher and being as Christian in this way: “our job is to stand with one foot on earth and one in heaven, with the double vision that is the gift of faith, and to say out of our own experience that reality is not flat but deep, not opaque but transparent, not meaningless but shot full of grace for those with the least willingness to believe it is so.”²¹ She further states, “This is our common call. It comes to each one of us in a different way, calling for the particular gifts of our particular lives, and each one of us is free to respond or play deaf. But God never stops calling. Lay any life out for close inspection, and the truth becomes clear. God called us from the womb and calls us still, the tireless shepherd who never stops calling us home.”²²

Part two of this session was entitled: “Sisters Who Stand On Sacred Ground.” The biblical passage in Numbers 27:1-8 was examined. This biblical passage of these five daughters of Zelophehad was chosen in order to present strength, unity, and leadership among women. The choosing of this biblical passage was supported by the words that

²¹ Taylor, *The Preaching Life*, 13.

²² Taylor, *The Preaching Life*, 13.

Bishop Vashti McKenzie stated in the reference to female leadership in Old Testament.

She states,

For the most part, women in the Old Testament were identified by their relationship to their husbands, sons, or fathers. They were considered the possessions of men. Several women who functioned within the role of wife, mother, and homemaker emerged as leaders. Their leadership was not authority granted by an outside agency or the order of society, but authority seized because of circumstances.²³

Because of the circumstances of these five women, they took the opportunity to seize the moment and bring about change for themselves as well as the countless women who would come behind them.

There were other biblical passages that were chosen for this module that were referenced but not covered in detail such as the biblical passage of Luke 10:38-42, the account of sisters Mary and Martha and their encounter with Jesus. The biblical passage of the woman at the well in John 4:25-26; 39-42 was also reference. The examination of all of the above biblical passages laid the biblical foundation for this module, which led to the open discussion of the session.

In the open discussion, participants shared details in relation to their call to preach and how important it was for them to have a strong foundation to stand on in the call to preach. One participant shared how God will usually call us into some uncomfortable spaces and places that we as women usually will feel unqualified for. In the words of one participant,

I just want to say thank you to everyone because you are really speaking to me. There are some things that God has been asking me to do and it is way out of my

²³ McKenzie, *Not Without A Struggle*, 56.

comfort zone, and I have recently pressed my way forward and put my myself in places with other people that are doing what I know God has called me to do.²⁴

For another participant, in her reference to being called to preach, she commented on how important it was for her to be connected to a church where she could receive the support and the proper training that she needed. She explained how she was connected to a church where she was not receiving the proper training that she needed, and that she had to leave that church and go to where she could get the help that she needed. She stated: “My brother is a pastor, and I had to go there to be able to grow in my calling in order to be utilized in the call to preach.”²⁵ This session of open discussion provided a great opportunity for the engaging of the participants. This module ended with the assigning of a journal assignment and the session was closed out in prayer. There were twelve participants in attendance for this module.

Module Two - “Historical Perspective”

Module two took place on Thursday, June 10, 2021, at 6:30 pm, with the opening protocol that had been previously set. I was the presenter for this module. The area of focus for this session was from the “Historical Perspective.” (See Appendix G). The theme for this module was “The Courage.” The task was “to examine the lives of historical female figures and their call to preach.” Part one was titled: “The Shoes We Fill!” The text that was used for this module was different resources in relation to these historical female figures. These historical female figures included:

²⁴ Open Discussion, Module One, June 3, 2021.

²⁵ Open Discussion, Module One, June 3, 2021.

1. Jarena Lee
2. Amanda Berry Smith
3. Sojourner Truth
4. Antionette Brown Blackwell
5. Kathryn Kuhlman
6. Julia A. Foote
7. Harriet Tubman

A description of the life, calling, and ministries of these women were presented, and these seven historical female figures were chosen to give context to this project and demonstrate the courage that women must have in order to walk in their call to preach. Also, these women were presented in order to show that the call to preach for women is not a new occurrence, and that there is indeed a rich historical presence of women who were called to preach.

Part two of this module was titled: “The Shoes We Fight!” In this section, I explained that “The Shoes We Fight” is in reference to women in ministry fighting against one another. The crab mentality was highlighted, and the question was put forth: “Do we support one another, or do we suppress one another? The participants were reminded that as women in ministry, we should “help” and not “hinder” one another. The participants were also reminded that the strongest fabric that binds us together is women supporting women. This topic, “The Shoes We Fight,” led to the open discussion of “The Talk.”

In the open discussion of “The Talk,” the participants engaged in open and honest discussion. One participant shared a comment in relation to the history of women in the

church, and she stated, “a reason that that a lot of women are ‘staying in their place’ has to do with the church that they serve in.”²⁶ She furthered stated that, “historically women have been preaching in the church for a very long time, and that the church referred to it as giving a testimony.”²⁷ Another participant shared how her story was a little different in that it has always been other women, and particularly women in ministry, that have always suppressed her in her walk in ministry, and that the support she receives normally comes from men.²⁸ Another participant commented that, “it is not our sisters in ministry that we fight with, but that it is actually the enemy using that particular sister, and that we have to remember that we’re in a spiritual fight and that we should not take it personal, when it comes to another woman in ministry.”²⁹ This session of open discussion provided a rich conversation among the participants.

This module concluded with the participants being given a journaling assignment. The overall intended goal of this session was that the participants would gain a greater knowledge of historical female preachers, as well as honor their own history and heritage, and promote harmony among women in ministry. The session was closed out in prayer and there were ten participants in attendance for this module.

²⁶ Open Discussion, Module Two, June 10, 2021.

²⁷ Open Discussion, Module Two, June 10, 2021.

²⁸ Open Discussion, Module Two, June 10, 2021.

²⁹ Open Discussion, Module Two, June 10, 2021

Module Three - “Theoretical Perspective”

Module three took place on Thursday, June 17, 2021, at 6:30 pm with the opening protocol that had previously been set. I was the coordinator of this module as well as the presenter. The area of focus was from a “Theoretical Perspective.” (See Appendix G). The theme for this module was “The Confidence!” The task was as followed: “to examine areas in psychology, particularly feminine psychology, and to examine some self-theories as it relates to building up oneself.” Part one of this module was titled: “These Shoes Were Made For Walking!” The text that was used was the examination of three self-theory models that included: self-concept theory, self-identity theory, and self-efficacy theory.

I began by defining the area of feminine psychology, as well as defining the notion of “self” and the different components that are contributed to “self.” The first theory presented was Carl’s Rogers “self-concept theory” that was set forth and defined in the interdisciplinary chapter. The three components within this theory that were presented were: self-image, self-esteem, and the ideal self. These three components were set forth and defined as it relates to the interdisciplinary chapter.

The next theory presented was the “self-identity” theory that was set forth and defined in the interdisciplinary chapter. The four components within this theory that was presented were: assimilation, questioning and awareness, rejection and disengagement, and integration and reengagement. These four components were set forth and defined as it relates to the interdisciplinary chapter.

The final theory that was presented was Albert Bandura's "self-efficacy" theory. The four components within this theory that were: mastery experience, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and psychological and emotional states.

Part Two of this module was titled: "Building Her Preaching Self's!" In this section of the module, Rev. Dr. Leroy Cothran, who serves as the pastor of United Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio, was extended an invitation to participate in this module and present words of empowerment to women in ministry from a "male's perspective." Dr. Cothran was asked to speak for twenty minutes followed with time of questions and answers. The reasoning for choosing Dr. Cothran for this portion of the project was due to the reality that he has experience in working with women in ministry, being that all three of his associate ministers are women. Dr. Cothran is one that constantly encourages and empowers the female clergy within his context as well as in other contexts.

Some of the context of "empowerment" from the "male perspective" that Dr. Cothran shared with the participants was to first "Know who is the one that called you as a woman in ministry."³⁰ Dr. Cothran reminded the participants of having a sure and strong foundation in their call to preach. Dr. Cothran encouraged the participants to stand on the reality that God called them and not man, and therefore, you do not have to defend or try to explain your calling. In the words of Dr. Cothran, "when you know who you are as a woman that has been called by God, then you do not have to take no backseat to any man! Because the same God that called men, is the same God that called women."³¹

³⁰ Leroy Cothran, Module Three: "The Male Perspective," June 17, 2021.

³¹ Leroy Cothran, Module Three: "The Male Perspective," June 17, 2021

Dr. Cothran also instructed the participants to embrace who they are as a woman. Furthermore, Dr. Cothran explained the importance of embracing the feminine side of God and explained the fact that as women, we have the capability of bringing the feminine side to a biblical text that a man cannot bring. Dr. Cothran reminded the participants of their uniqueness and power as being a woman minister. Dr. Cothran also dealt with the practical side of ministry and express the important of “self-care.” Dr. Cothran encouraged the participants to “accept rest” and take time out for themselves. He encouraged taking time off, taking vacations and trips, going to the spa, getting hair and nails done, and just having another person to which they can just be themselves with, vent and receive encouragement and advice. Dr. Cothran also stressed the “loneliness” that comes along with ministry, and that as women, we cannot just date or marry any and everybody. One of the most powerful aspects of Dr. Cothran’s presentation was the fact that Dr. Cothran, without calling any names, was able to speak personally to two of the lay women who were present, and he encouraged them in their quest in seeking the call of God on their lives. Dr. Cothran ended the presentation by sharing that as a man called by God, he knows who he is and that women in ministry do not intimidate him, as it does some men.³² Furthermore, Dr Cothran emphasized the importance for the need for a ministry for clergy women that is much needed in the Dayton area. In closing, Dr. Cothran encouraged the women that no matter what, “Know that it is God who called you, always walk in your calling, and always glorify God, for God is the one who called you.”³³

³² Leroy Cothran, Module Three: “The Male Perspective,” June 17, 2021.

³³ Leroy Cothran, Module Three: “The Male Perspective,” June 17, 2021

After Dr. Cothran's presentation of empowerment, the participants were allowed some time to engage Dr. Cothran in a question-and-answer period. What was of interest was the fact that no participants had any questions for Dr. Cothran, and that they only had comments and specific thanks. One participant thanked Dr. Cothran for his boldness and stepping out as a Baptist pastor supporting women in ministry. One participant, in particular, personally thanked Dr. Cothran for a day when they both just happen to be in the same setting outside of a church setting and Dr. Cothran took the time to give her words of encouragement as being a woman in ministry. The participant alluded to the fact that the encouragement that she received from Dr. Cothran was a great help to her in her call to ministry.

At the end of the presentation, Dr. Cothran was thanked for his expertise and time. The session continued with a brief time of open discussion, after which, journal reflections were assigned, and the session closed out in prayer. There were thirteen participants present for this module.

Module Four- "Practical Perspective"

Module four took place on Thursday, June 24, 2021, at 6:30 pm, with the opening protocol that had previously been set. I was the presenter for this module. The area of focus was from a "Practical Perspective." (See Appendix G). The theme for this module was "The Challenges." The task was "to present practical tools for women in the preaching ministry, and to also discuss challenges that women in ministry face." Part one of this module was titled: "Walking in Glass Slippers!" The text that was used were the practical tools presented by the presenter.

I presented fourteen practical tools that can be used to help women in the preaching ministry. Those tools were:

1. “The Practical will Preach!” Movies, news, books, nature, and life experiences can assist in preaching.
2. “The Puzzle Piece!” You will not always fit in!
3. “Ecosystem of Exhorters!” To include Supportive Sisters, Surface Sisters, Spam Sisters, Mentoring Mothers, and Father Figures
4. “Be Comfortable in the skin you’re in!” Find your way, so that you can pave the way!
5. “Don’t Forsake Your Foundation!” Being planted on a good foundation, in a good church home, where you can grow and be nurtured.
6. Try on your “Training Shoes!” Make sure you receive good, sound training.
7. “Know your limits and set boundaries!” Teach people how to treat you!
8. “Love you, Be You & Take care you! The importance of being yourself!
9. “Come” Apart, before you “Fall” Apart! The importance of spiritual self-care
10. “Rest, Relax & Reset!” The importance of physical self-care!
11. I’m a “Preacher,” but I’m still a “Person!” Sometimes all that people will ever see is the “preacher” and not the person!”
12. “Passion” Past the “Pulpit!” Seek your purpose, passion, and place beyond the pulpit! The World needs you and is waiting on you!
13. “Ripple Effect of Resource!” The sharing of resources and being a support to other women in ministry.
14. “Build Your Bibliography!” Start Your Library and Read, Read, Read!

The presenting of these fourteen practical tools for women in ministry led to open discussion of “The Talk.” The title for this discussion was: “Women what makes you weep?” The scripture text John: 20:11-16 was presented, and the question posed by

Jesus to Mary was, “Woman why are you weeping?” This section of the module provided space for the participants to share in the discussion of some of the challenges that women in ministry face. To open up this discussion, this quote was referenced,

Many African American Clergywomen face similar pressures and challenges. These experiences include the constant pressure to explain and defend the call to the gospel ministry; the pressure that your success or failure affects the women who follow you; and the realization that you must be better than, or just as good as, the best male for the position in order to be considered.³⁴

Some of the challenges that the participants stated that they face as women in ministry were jealousy displayed by other women in ministry, and the need for women to compete against one another and compare themselves to other women in ministry. One participant shared that not only does she have to fight against sexism, but there are other “isms” that she has to fight against such as racism and classism. Participants also shared that as women in ministry, they have to work twice as hard as any man. In the words of one of the participants, when it comes to preaching, “A man can miss the mark every Sunday, but women cannot.”³⁵ The lack of support from men in ministry was also a challenge among some of the participants. This context, centered around the challenges that women in ministry face, provided rich conversation for this section of the module.

Part Two-Module Four- “Proclamation Perspective”

Part two of this module included its own individual area of focus which was from the “Proclamation Perspective.” This part of the module also included its own theme titled “The Clarion Call,” and this part of the module also included its own title of “Fitted

³⁴ Mc Kenzie, *Not Without A Struggle*, 67.

³⁵ Open Discussion, Module Four, June 24, 2021.

For The Kingdom!” “Fitted For the Kingdom” was the closing out sermonette for this project that was delivered by me (See Appendix G). This closing out sermonette was intended to be the culmination for the project and the intended goal behind the preaching of this sermon was designed in such a way that the participants would exit the project with a sense of empowerment and that they would know that they have been “Fitted For The Kingdom,” and with that realization in mind they would be empowered to know, “If The Shoe Fits, Wear It!” Preach The Word!”

This module was concluded with a brief discussion and comments about the sermonette. The participants were thanked for their time, care, and commitment to this project, and the project was concluded and closed out in prayer. There were thirteen participants that were present for this module.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection process for this project began with all participants being provided with a pre-survey (See Appendix D) that consisted of fifteen questions. Participants were instructed to complete the pre-survey and return back to me. All fourteen participants completed and returned the survey. The first four questions of the pre-survey were analyzed (See Appendix D). Question one: “Are you actively involved in a church?” All fourteen participants responded “yes.” Question two: “Are you a clergy person or a lay person?” Eleven participants responded as a clergy person and three participants responded as a lay person. Question three: “Do you sense the call of God on your life to preach the Word of God?” Twelve participants responded “Yes.” One responded “no” and one responded, “not sure.” Question four: “Are you currently

walking in the call to preach?” Eleven participants responded “yes,” and three responded “no.”

Questions 6 and 7 are questions that were used as a measuring gauge in relation to the hypothesis. Question 6: “If you are currently walking in the call to preach, do you feel confident in walking in the call to preach?” Six participants responded “yes,” five participants responded “somewhat,” and three responded “does not apply. Question 7: “On a scale from 1 to 10, with one being the least and ten being the greatest, how confident are you in walking in your call to preach?” The analysis of this question was measured in twelve of the fourteen participants, as two participants responded, “does not apply.” For the twelve participants that responded, the range was from 4 to 10, with four being the lowest and 10 being the highest. The mean was 82.5, the median was 7 and the mode was 10.

The post-survey (See Appendix E) consisted of fifteen questions that contained several questions that were slightly different from the pre-survey (See Appendix D). The reasoning for this difference was due to the fact that these questions were needed in order to be used as a measuring gauge in relation to the hypothesis. Questions 9, 10; 13 and 14 were used as a measuring gauge in relation to the hypotheses. Question 9: “After participating in the project, do you feel you gained a greater sense of courage in walking in your call to preach?” Twelve participants responded “yes,” one participant responded “somewhat,” and one responded, “does not apply.” Question 10: “After participating in the project, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the least and 10 being the greatest, how confident are you in walking in the call to preach?” The analysis of this question was measured in thirteen of fourteen participants, with one participant responding, “does not

apply.” For the thirteen participants that responded, the range was from 8 to 10, with 8 being the lowest and 10 being the highest. The mean was 115.7, the median was 10 and the mode was 10.

Question 13: “If you are currently walking in the call to preach, after taking part in this project, do you feel more empowered in walking confidently and comfortably in your call to preach?” Twelve participants responded “yes” and two participants responded, “does not apply.” Question 14: “If you are not currently walking in the call to preach, after taking part in this project, do you feel a sense of empowerment to further seek God in answering the call to preach?” Thirteen of the participants responded “does not apply” and one participant responded “yes.”

Outcome

The data was measured between two groups, clergy women and lay women, and the results are: all eleven clergy women gained a greater sense of empowerment in walking in their call to preach while two of the lay women gained a greater sense of empowerment in seeking God in their call to preach. For the remaining lay woman, she recognized that she has not been called to preach. However, after participating in the project, she reported gaining a sense of empowerment in walking in the lay ministry in a leadership role that she currently serves in. The overall results of the data show that the hypothesis set forth, “If women in ministry attend empowerment session on preaching, then they will be empowered to walk more comfortably in their call to preach,” was supported.

Summary of Learning

Project

From a personal standpoint, the implementation of this project has resulted in a renewed sense of purpose and passion within me as a woman in ministry. Being one who has been called not only to preach the Word of God but also to equip, encourage, and empower women in ministry, this project has taught me that I am equipped and that I have what it takes to empower women in ministry. This project has also taught me that women in ministry are looking for and longing for a ministry where they can find help and encouragement in walking in the call to preach. This project has allowed me to connect with women that I might not of had the opportunity to meet otherwise as well as to learn from and grow with others. Overall, this project has taught me that “If God is for me, who can be against me?” This opportunity has taught me that others believe in me more than I believe in myself, and that indeed, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

The participants reported that they experienced personal growth as well as gained a wealth of knowledge that was set forth in the presentations. The participants shared that they were able the glean and learn from the other participants in the project and that meaningful relationships and connections were made as a result of this project. The participants expressed that they learned the important value of having the support of men, as well as learning the important value of having support from other women in ministry. In referring to having the support of other women in ministry, I was personally empowered by one of the written comments from a participants. She stated, “The good

old girls club is needed, and it will take leaders like you to make sure we have one. This shoe definitely fits you!”³⁶ She further stated, “Biblically we (women) are the carriers of New Life and the Gospel. We are the gender with a womb. We are designed for this. The Shoe fits us!”³⁷

Program

As a result of this project, my eyes were recently opened to the realization of the rich history of “first women” that is recorded in this institution’s history. “In 1883, Esther Balmer Sage was the first woman to graduate from Union Biblical Seminary in the English curriculum.”³⁸ In 1889, the General Conference of the United Brethren in Christ approved the ordaining of women and Ella Neiswonger was the first woman to be ordained. In 1956, Harriet L. Miller became the first woman to serve as faculty. In 2008, Dr. Wendy J. Deichmann became the first female president, and in 2018, Dr. Bridget Weatherspoon became the first African American woman to serve as the Vice-President for enrollment.³⁹ To learn that I am a part of an institution that contains such a rich history of “first women” will be very empowering and encouraging for me as a woman in ministry.

³⁶ Comment from Post-survey, Participant E.

³⁷ Comment from Post-survey, Participant E.

³⁸ Anniversary Booklet, *Celebrating 150 Years of United Theological Seminary*, October 10, 2021, 10.

³⁹ Anniversary Booklet, *Celebrating 150 Years of United Theological Seminary*, October 10, 2021, 10-12.

Conclusion

Given the parameters set in place by this pandemic, this project worked well, being that it had to be conducted virtually. I do believe that had it been conducted in person, it would have created greater participation among the participants. All of the participants did not participate in open discussion. One thing that that I would have done differently is to invite other participants into the discussion by personally calling their name and inviting them into the conversation. Another aspect that I would have done differently would be to share the workload of presenting and preaching with some other women in ministry.

One of the present values that the project presented virtually was that the project was able to be attended by women who lived out of state. The future value in conducting the project virtually is that the project will be able to reach more women locally, nationally, and even globally. This particular project did not focus on specific techniques or the aspects of art of preaching. However, future presenting of this project could include a greater emphasis on the art of preaching. This project included the “male perspective,” but in the future this project could be presented to include more men into the conversation. Finally, this project was geared towards women in the preaching ministry, but for future reference, this project could include all women from all walks of life and from different types of ministries.

Final Reflection

I must first begin this closing by acknowledging the presence of “Team Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit,” for their assistance in this project from conception to

completion. This project was birthed out of my passion for preaching, and it was also birthed out of my passion witnessing other women answering the call of God on their life, and also to walk boldly in their call. I truly believe that is not just a “project,” but this is “purpose.” And being that I am a product of “Prophetic Preaching and Praxis” cohort, “I prophesy that this project will not “sit on the shelf,” but it will take on “hearts, hands, legs and feet” and go forth in the world and produce and affect great change.

The curtain of this body of work opened up in the “context of Cinderella,” and it is only befitting that this body of work close in the “context of Cinderella.” As Cinderella is so graciously fitted with her glass slipper, she finally arrives to her divine destiny that she was designed for. The Cinderella Syndrome says this:

What the working woman needs is the fairy godmother to come and whisk away the old paradigm for one short evening, so that everyone around her can see the world in a new way. In this new world, her ways of working are valued differently, and the woman really does become a ‘new person’ in the eyes of everyone around her. Of course, she is the same. It’s the paradigm that has changed!⁴⁰

So, to my sisters, “If The Shoe Fits, Wear It!” Go Forth and Preach the Word! You have been Fitted for The Kingdom!

⁴⁰ Becker, Leading Ladies, 115.

APPENDIX A
INVITATION LETTER

Invitation Letter

April 1, 2021

Dear Servant of God,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I pray that this correspondence finds you and your family safe and well in these trying times. My name is Rose Ann Irwin and I serve in ministry at the United Missionary Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio, where I serve as the Senior Associate Minister. Currently, I am a Doctor of Ministry student at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, where I am in my fifth semester and my focus group is Prophetic Preaching and Praxis. As a fifth semester student, I am entering the project phase of this doctoral program, and I am extending an invitation to you to participate in the project phase of my educational journey. The title of my project is: "If The Shoe Fits, Wear It: Empowering Women Ministers To Walk Comfortably in Their Call To Preach!" This project will focus on the empowering of women who are currently walking in their call to preach, as well as those women who are currently seeking God in answering their call to preach! This project will consist of workshops that will include teaching presentations, discussions, and conclude with a sermon presentation. The projected dates and times of this project are as followed:

Thursday June 3, 2021-6:30pm-8:00pm

Thursday June 10, 2021-6:30pm-8:00pm

Thursday June 17, 2021-6:30pm-8:00pm

Thursday June 24, 2021-6:30pm-8:00pm

Due to the current crisis of this pandemic, and to ensure the safety of all participants, these workshops will be conducted virtually through Zoom and the link and log-in information will be emailed to you prior to the start of the project. This project will also include pre-surveys and post surveys that will be emailed to you prior to the project and at the conclusion of the project. Please be advised that this project asks for complete confidentiality of all participants as well as the respect of views, opinions, and beliefs of all participants.

Furthermore, please be advised that at if anytime during the project phase that you no longer wish to participate in this project, you are free to withdraw from the project without any explanation. Also, there will be no monetary cost required of you to take part in this project, nor will the researcher receive any monetary gain for conducting this project. In closing, I would like to personally thank you for your time in receiving and reading this invitation letter. Please know that your participation in this project will be greatly appreciated and it will also be a great help to me during the project phase of my doctoral studies. If you agree to participate in this project, please sign the consent form that is attached and email it back to me.

With sincere thanks,

Rev. Rose A. Irwin

Doctoral Student & Researcher

APPENDIX B

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROJECT

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROJECT

“If The Shoe Fits, Wear It: Empowering Women Ministers To Walk Comfortably In Their Call To Preach!”



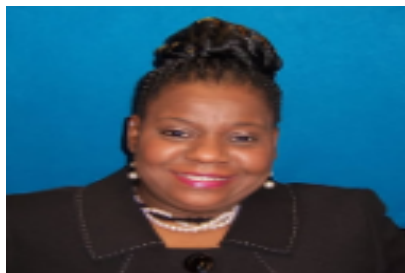
Project Dates and Times

Thursday June 3, 2021-6:30pm-8:00pm

Thursday June 10, 2021-6:30pm-8:00pm

Thursday June 17, 2021-6:30pm-8:00pm

Thursday June 24, 2021-6:30pm-8:00pm



Rose A. Irwin-Doctor of Ministry Candidate/Researcher

APPENDIX C
CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent Document to Participate in Doctoral Studies Project
Project-Empowerment Workshop for Women Ministers

You are invited to participate in a research project that focuses on the empowerment of women ministers to walk comfortably in the call to preach. You are being asked to participate in this project because you are a woman that is currently walking in the preaching ministry or seeking God in the call to the preaching ministry. Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand. If you are receiving this inquiry, the researcher has already been in contact with you concerning the project and verbal consent was already obtained. However, if you have any questions or concerns regarding this project, please contact the researcher, before you make a final decision to participate.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to empower women ministers to walk comfortably in the call to preach, as well as to encourage and empower those women who are seeking God in answering the call to preach. It is the hope of the researcher that this project will be a great benefit to women in ministry, as well as be a catalyst of connection, where women in ministry can find support and encouragement.

PROCEDURES OF THE PROJECT

The project will take place for four consecutive weeks, with one (90 minute) session per week. Participants will attend virtual workshop sessions where different topics and subjects will be discussed. The platform for the project will consist of teachings, PowerPoint presentations, discussions, and a sermonette. Participants will be encouraged to take notes and keep a project journal for possible questions or feedback the participants may want to share. The project will also consist of pre-surveys and post-surveys.

POTENTIAL RISKS OF THE PROJECT

The researcher does not foresee any potential risks that will be harmful or hurtful to the participants during this project. However, there is the reality that risks are always possible. Potential risks of this project may include participants experiencing fear or discomfort in answering the call to preach, fear or discomfort in the elevation of going to higher altitudes in their preaching ministry, and the possible experience of disappointment or discomfort in personal self-discoveries that may surface. It is the researcher's hope that these potential risks that may be experienced are not harmful, but helpful.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

Potential benefits that this project may produce is that participants will gain greater knowledge in the different topics that will be presented; experience a greater commitment and passion in preaching the Word of God; discover strengths and weaknesses in one's own self-discoveries; develop a new circle of connection with other women in ministry; and receive support and experience sisterhood. The overall benefit is that the empowerment of all participants will occur and that participants will fully walk comfortably and confidently in their call to preach!

COST AND COMPENSATION FOR PROJECT

There will be no cost required of participants to participate in the project, nor will participants receive any compensation for participating in the project. The researcher will not receive any compensation for conducting this project.

CONFIDENTIALITY FOR THE PROJECT

The project will be conducted with the confidentiality of all participants. Any information that will be obtained will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. All participants will be asked to respect the confidentiality of all participants and all information provided to the researcher will be kept confidential. All journal entries and notes will remain the personal property of the participants. All surveys will be kept confidential by the researcher and kept for one year after the project and will be destroyed by shredding.

WITHDRAWAL AND PARTICIPATION FROM THE PROJECT

At any time during the project phase that any participant decides to no longer participate, that participant may withdraw from the project without any explanation required. Also, if at any time during the project phase that the participants do not wish to engage in discussions or answer any questions, participants may exercise that right without any required explanation.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT RESEARCHER

At any time prior to, during or after the project phase that participants need to contact the researcher, please feel free to email the researcher at: rairwin1@united.edu or call researcher at: 937-620-7452.

PERMISSION OF PARTICIPATION FOR PROJECT

If you have read all the above information and will agree to accept the invitation to participate in this project, please fill out the information below and provide a signature of consent.

With Sincere Thanks,
Rose A. Irwin-Researcher

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Signature _____

APPENDIX D
PROJECT PRE-SURVEY

Project Pre-Survey

“If The Shoe Fits, Wear It: Empowering Women Ministers To Walk Comfortably In Their Call To Preach!”

Please complete pre-survey and email back to the researcher by the deadline:
Wednesday June 2, 2021.

(Please answer by placing an (X) next to your response)

1. Are you actively involved in a church?
Yes ____ No ____
2. Are you a Clergy Person or a Lay Person?
Clergy ____ Lay ____
3. Do you sense a call of God on your life to preach the Word of God?
Yes ____ No ____ Not Sure ____
4. Are you currently walking in the call to preach?
Yes ____ No ____ Not Sure ____
5. If you are currently walking in the call to preach, how long have you been walking in the call to preach?
Less than a year ____ 1-5 years ____ 5-10 years ____ 10-15 years ____
15-20 years ____ 20+ Years ____ Does not apply ____
6. If you are currently walking in the call to preach, do you feel confident in walking in the call to preach?
Yes ____ No ____ Somewhat ____ Does not apply ____
7. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the least and 10 being the greatest, how confident are you in walking in the call to preach?
(1-10) ____ Does not apply ____
8. Have you ever prepared a sermon?
Yes ____ No ____ Not Sure ____
9. Have you ever delivered a sermon?
Yes ____ No ____ Not Sure ____
10. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the least and 10 being the greatest, how confident are you in your ability to deliver a sermon?
(1-10) ____ Does not apply ____
11. When given the chance, do you normally listen to recordings of your sermons?
Yes ____ No ____ Sometimes ____ Does not apply ____
12. On average, how often do you preach?
Weekly ____ Monthly ____ Yearly ____ Not at all ____
13. Do you value the support of other women in ministry?
Yes ____ No ____ Somewhat ____ Does not apply ____
14. Do you value the support of men in ministry?

Yes ____ No ____ Somewhat ____ Does not apply ____
15. Do you have a strong sense of self, an understanding who you are as a
woman/ woman in ministry?

Yes ____ No ____ Somewhat ____

APPENDIX E
PROJECT POST-SURVEY

Project Post-Survey

“If The Shoe Fits, Wear It: Empowering Women Ministers To Walk Comfortably In Their Call To Preach!”

Please complete post-survey and email it back to the researcher by the deadline: Friday July 9, 2021.

(Please answer by placing an (X) next to your response)

1. How many sessions of the project did you attend?

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____

2. In reference to the “Biblical Perspective,” was the information presented helpful to you as a woman in ministry/call to preach?

Yes _____ No _____ Somewhat _____ Did not attend _____

3. In reference to the “Historical Perspective,” was the information presented helpful to you in you as a woman in ministry/call to preach?

Yes _____ No _____ Somewhat _____ Did not attend _____

4. In reference to the “Theoretical Perspective,” was the information presented helpful to you as a woman in ministry/call to preach?

Yes _____ No _____ Somewhat _____ Did not attend _____

5. In reference to the “Practical Perspective,” was the information presented helpful to you as a woman in ministry/call to preach?

Yes _____ No _____ Somewhat _____ Did not attend _____

6. In reference to the “Male Perspective,” was the advice and encouragement presented helpful to you as a woman in ministry/call to preach?

Yes _____ No _____ Somewhat _____ Not Present _____

7. In reference to the “Proclamation Perspective,” was the sermonette that was presented empowering to you as a woman in ministry/call to preach?

Yes _____ No _____ Somewhat _____ Does not Apply _____

8. After participating in this project, do you feel that you gained a greater sense of who you are as a woman/woman in ministry?

Yes _____ No _____ Somewhat _____ Does Not Apply _____

9. After participating in this project, do you feel you gained a greater sense of courage in walking in your call to preach?

Yes _____ No _____ Somewhat _____ Does Not Apply _____

10. After participating in this project, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the least and 10 being the greatest, how confident are you in walking in the call to preach?

(1-10) ____ Does Not Apply ____

11. After participating in the project, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the least and 10 being the greatest, how confident are you in your ability to deliver a sermon?

(1-10) ____ Does Not Apply ____

12. Did you feel that the voices of the other participants were beneficial to your learning experience during this project?

Yes ____ No ____ Somewhat ____

13. If you ARE currently walking in the call to preach, after taking part in this project, do you feel more empowered in walking confidently and comfortably in your call to preach?

Yes ____ No ____ Somewhat ____ Does Not Apply ____

14. If you are NOT currently walking in the call to preach, after taking part in this project, do you feel a sense of empowerment to further seek God in answering the call to preach?

Yes ____ No ____ Somewhat ____ Not Sure ____ Does not apply ____

15. After taking part in this project, are you interested in continuing this conversation and platform that will serve as a resource and support of women in ministry?

Yes ____ No ____ Not Sure ____ Does Not Apply ____

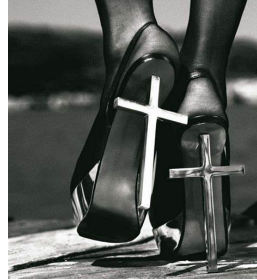
Please feel free to add any addition comments, suggestions, or complaints below or add an attachment:

APPENDIX F

PROJECT OVERVIEW MODULE OUTLINE

Project Overview Module Outline

Rev. Rose A. Irwin-Researcher/Doctor of Ministry Candidate



“If The Shoe Fits, Wear It: Empowering Women Ministers To Walk Comfortably In Their Call To Preach!”

PROJECT OVERVIEW MODULE

Project Overview Session was presented one week prior to project
All sessions were conducted virtually through zoom and a power Point Presentation was used for each session. ****

- Greetings given by Project Presenter
- Began Session with Prayer
- Meet & Greet of Participants
- Title of Project was Presented and Explained
- Introduction given by Project Presenter
 - o Minister at United Missionary Baptist Church
 - o Doctor of Ministry Student at United Theological Seminary
 - o Prophetic Preaching and Praxis Focus Group
 - o Completion of Doctoral Program-December 2021
- Project Dates and Times given
 - o Thursday June 3, 2021- 6:30pm-8:00pm
 - o Thursday June 10, 2021- 6:30pm-8:00pm
 - o Thursday June 17, 2021-6:30p-8:00pm
 - o Thursday June 24, 2021-6:30pm-8:00pm
- Project Pre-Work- All Pre-Work was required Completed Prior To Overview Session
 - o Project Invitation Letter
 - o Project Informed Consent Form
 - o Project Pre-Survey
 - o Project Overview Session
- Invitation and Explanation of a time of Fasting and Prayer For Project
 - o Explanation that each session would begin with prayer
 - o Participants were invited to join the project presenter in a time of fasting and prayer during the project implementation phase
- Project Session Outline Given
 - o The Theme
 - o The Title

- The Task
 - The Text
 - The Talk
 - The Take-Away
- Heel Homework
 - Reflections and Personal Journal Writing For Each Session
- Week One-Module One
 - Biblical Perspective
 - Brief Overview presented
- Week Two-module Two
 - Historical Perspective
 - Brief Overview Presented
- Week Three-Module Three
 - Theoretical Perspective
 - Brief Overview Presented
- Week Four-Module Four
 - Practical Perspective
 - Brief Overview Presented
- Project Post-Work
 - Post-Surveys to be email June 25, 2021
- Purpose of Project
 - Project to take on hands and feet
- Future Goal-Birthing From Project
 - Formation of Empowerment Ministry For Clergy Women
 - The “C.R.O.W.N” Connection! Clergy Resource of Women Network
- Future Goal-Birthing From Project
 - Birthing of Book From Project dissertation- “Walking in Glass Slippers!” Empowering Women In The Preaching Ministry
- Conclusion of Overview Session
 - Session One- Following Thursday, June 3, 2021 @ 6:30 pm
 - Dismissed in Prayer

APPENDIX G

PROJECT MODULES/SERMON OULINE

Project Modules/Sermon Outline

Doctor of Ministry Project

Rev. Rose A. Irwin-Researcher/Doctor of Ministry Candidate

“If The Shoe Fits, Wear It: Empowering Women Ministers To Walk Comfortably In Their Call To Preach!”

Module 1- “Biblical Perspective”

The Theme: “The Call!”

The Title 1: “Shoes and Sacred Ground!”

The Task: Examination of Scripture Texts that focus on acknowledging, answering, accepting, and appreciating the call to preach

The Text: Exodus 3:12; Joshua 3:13-17

The Title 2: “Sisters who stand on Sacred Ground!”

The Text- Numbers 27:1-8 Luke 10: 38-42

The Talk -Open Discussion!

The Take-away: The intended goal for this session is that the participants will gain greater awareness and appreciation of having a strong Biblical Foundation in their call to Preach!

***Participants are given “Heel Homework” and ask to journal their own personal reflections

Module 2- “Historical Perspective”

Theme- “The Courage!”

Title #1: “The Shoes we Fill!”

Task-Examining the Call to Preach From Historical Figures!

Text-Examining the lives of: Jarena Lee, Amanda Berry Smith, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Antionette Brown Blackwell, Kathryn Kuhlman, and Julia A. Foote

Title #2: “The Shoes we Fight!”

The Talk- Open Discussion with struggling with the call to preach. A Discussion of the participants, recognizing the women in their own lives who are or were instrumental in helping them in their call to preach.

Take-away: The intended goal of this session is that the participants will gain a greater knowledge of historical female figures and their call to preach as well gain a greater awareness and appreciation in acknowledging the “shoes we fill!”

*** Participants are given “Heel Homework” and asked to journal their own personal reflections!

Module 3- “Theoretical Perspective”

Theme: “The Confidence!”

Title #1: “These Shoes Were Made for Walking!”

Task: Examination of Self-Theories

Text: Examining the Self Theories, Self-Concept, Self-Identity, Self-Esteem, and Self-Efficacy

Title #2: Building “Her” Preaching “Self’s”

***Guest Speaker- “The Male Perspective!”-Rev. Dr. Leroy Cothran: “Empowering and Encouraging Women In Ministry!”

The Talk: Open Discussion on Building one’s Preaching Self’s!

Take-away: The intended goal of this session is that the participants will gain a greater knowledge of “Self-Theories” and also gain a greater sense of encouragement in the building of their “Preaching Self”!

*** Participants are given “Heel Homework” and asked to journal their own personal reflections! ***

Module 4- Part One- “Practical Perspective”

Theme: “The Challenges!”

Title: “Walking in Glass Slippers!”

Task: Examining the Challenges that Women in The Preaching Ministry Face!

Text: Introducing John 20:11-16

The Talk: Open Discussion – The Topic – “Women, What Makes You Weep?”-John 20:11-16

Module 4-Part Two- “Proclamation Perspective”

Theme #2: “The Clarion!”– The Closing Clarion Call!

Title #2: Project Closing Out Sermonette!

“Fitted For The Kingdom!” – Rev. Rose A. Irwin

Song of Solomon 7:1a; Romans 10:15; John 20:16-18

Conclusion of Project-Discussion on Sermonette from participants; Closing remarks; expressions of thanks given by the researcher! Participants were asked to complete post-surveys that will be emailed!

Sermon Outline: “Fitted For The Kingdom!”
Song of Solomon 7:1a; Romans 10:15; John 20:16-18

Introduction:

A Brief Introduction of the fairy tale “Cinderella!”

As Women in Ministry, we all have a shoe that is specifically designed to fit each and every one of us! We all have a Shoe to “Fill” and a purpose to “Fulfill!”

Text:

Point #1- “Perfect Fit!”— Song of Solomon 7:1a

***You Have Been Chosen! ***

Point #2- “Pretty Feet! – Romans 10: 15

*** You have been Called! ***

Point #3 – “Procced Forward!”- John 20: 16-18

*** You have been Commissioned!” ***

Point #4– “Preaching Field!”- Proceed To The Preaching Field!

***You Have Been Called To Continue! ***

**Go Forth And Preach The Word!!!!

Closing – The Cross, The Celebration and The Call To Action

Statement of Empowerment – “If The Shoe Fits, Wear It!” “You Have Been Fitted For The Kingdom! My Sisters, Preach The Word!!!!!

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